THE PSYCHIC REALM

E. KATHARINE BATES

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THE PSYCHIC REALM

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BY

E. KATHARINE BATES

AUTHOR OF "SEEN AND UNSEEN."

LONDON

GREENING & CO., LTD.

1910

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TO ALL THOSE,

WHO DESIRE ORDER AND HARMONY

IN THE PSYCHIC REALM

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THE PSYCHIC REALM

CHAPTER I

"OUR GOLD MINE AND HOW TO WORK IT"

IN the year 1898, the Jubilee of Modern Spiritualism, or as I prefer to call it, of modern Psychology, was commemorated in America, and a very kind invitation to attend these meetings was sent to me across the Atlantic. Unfortunately it was impossible to be there in person, and, on hearing this, I was invited to write a paper which should be read at one of the various conferences of the Memorial week.

I called my short address on that occasion *The Psychic Realm—Wanted a Constitution.* I have not the printed record at hand, nor can I, at this distance of time, recall accurately even the heads of the address, but it seems to me that the *Constitution* I then referred to is more urgently needed now than ever.

For the last sixty years our Pioneers have been

cutting down forests and making roads in the new domain of Thought—surely the time has arrived when we must begin to plan out our townships and build houses and streets; or be prepared to see a set of irresponsible Hooligans rush in where we—as fools, not angels—have feared to tread.

The present position as regards psychical research recalls to me very forcibly what must have been the physical conditions attendant on the sudden discovery of gold in the Californian mines of sixty years ago—oddly enough the discovery of the gold mines in California and the first feeble tappings of the gold mine in Rochester, New York State, were practically coincidental.

In the former case a mad rush set in at once—men sold their possessions and started off for the Fairyland described to them, too often falling a prey to the unscrupulous upon their arrival. The strong fell upon the weak and wrested from them the small sums they had managed to gather together before this hasty, ill-considered flight, to possible gain, but still more probable loss. A crew of thieving, cheating, brutalized and brutalizing men were gathered from all parts of the civilized world, to become the curse and the terror and despair of the more sober and law-abiding citizens of the Far West. Every sort of excess was

indulged in—every form of crime initiated and imitated. Drunk—not with wine, but with the yellow gold to be had for the digging, every kind of vice and abomination must have found a place in those far-distant wastes of land, held hitherto as of small account, in a country where fruits and flowers spring up spontaneously.

A *constitution* must have been sadly needed in that mad rush and scramble for physical gold, and every day we see more clearly the terrible and urgent need of a constitution, of method and laws wisely made and calmly enforced, in the psychic fields which are now being ploughed for the first time, in any orderly fashion.

The misfortune is that although this need is so urgent there are few who have awakened to the fact—many are asleep—others are indifferent, and many again are already absorbed in the road-making and the felling processes, and in the healthy joy and exercise involved in this work, they have neither time nor thoughts to spare for other aspects of the enterprise. Absorbed in their own immediate labours, they do not notice that camp followers are beginning to arrive in desultory fashion, marking out their own claims, foraging here and there for nourishment on their own account, entering singly or by twos and threes; but by slow degrees forming a compact body of

men; easily ignored individually, but more difficult to ignore *en masse* and perhaps not so easily repelled, when once they have "squatted" on their claims and worked irreparable mischief by keeping out the respectable artisans and other capable workmen so much needed in every growing country.

No one wishes to consort with "ne'er-do-weels" and ragamuffins, still less with thieves and liars, and if these are the people to be met upon the frontier, is it to be wondered at that so many of the men and women who would make the most admirable and capable citizens in the new realm, should pass by and resolve to have nothing to do with a country which produces such unfavourable specimens of Human Nature? Even the most charitable will say that although all these dregs of the population may not invariably be cheats, and thieves, or liars, yet they are apt to be weak-minded, or stubborn and prejudiced fools, and that the latter are no more to be desired than the former.

Meanwhile the earnest and serious pioneers are, as I have said, too apt to ignore these very real dangers and drawbacks, and to say, "Nobody ever really listens to such people—they are powerless to do our new country any harm—wait until we have got on a bit further—until we have hewn

down still more of the jungle and let in still more light, and *then* we can begin the constructive work, and plan our streets, and build our houses, and talk about a new Constitution for the Cities of the Future.

That is just where the initial and disastrous mistake is being made. Things never stand still in this world of ours—life would be far less complicated if they did occasionally. The work *you* don't find it convenient to do just now and therefore put aside for a more convenient season, will get done all the same—but probably by the wrong person. You may say, "My work is to pile up evidence—to make my own experiments, in fact to cut down the trees and let in the light according to my own ideas and most sane judgment. Don't worry me or yourself as to these hangers-on, without either experience or common sense—leave them alone!—no one will trouble about them. Ignore all such incapable and ignorant creatures!—they can do neither good nor harm."

Unfortunately they can do a great deal of harm and *are doing it*, and will continue to do it unless they are speedily checked. They are staking out their own claims and planting out their own streets, which generally lead to a bog or a morass, where they not only come to unutterable grief themselves (which is not to be so much deplored since ignor-

ance and obstinacy can only learn by such hard lessons), but into which they lead the innocent and well-meaning persons who have been attracted by their noisy and self-advertising methods.

To return to my earlier symbol. The gold mine is being worked, but instead of expert miners we are at the mercy of ignorant and incompetent workmen, who may find a nugget of gold occasionally, but are liable to bring down an avalanche of stones on our heads during their rash and ill-considered operations.

It has often struck me as strange, that although every other subject is supposed to need some amount of steady mental concentration before we are in a position to pronounce upon it, every one considers himself in a favourable position for criticizing and either approving or condemning matters connected with the psychic realm, although he has probably never given an hour's steady thought to the subject nor read a single standard work upon it. Whence does this curious anomaly arise ? I think from the almost universal error of supposing that Intuition is the only guide in psychic realms, and that hard work and concentrated thought are not so much *unnecessary* as obviously absurd in any such conjunction.

So each man thinks he has as much right as his neighbour to judge these matters, and that

his judgment of them is quite as valuable as those opinions on the subject which are backed up by long experience and earnest study. We need men of note and weight, such men as the scientists of various countries who are interesting themselves in the Psychic Realm, to speak with authority upon this misconception and to speak quickly.

The man in the street has a perfect right to his opinion on these subjects even if it differ from that of the scientists, since much depends upon experiences which *he* may have had, and which the scientist may have lacked—but the man in the street who has neither read nor studied, nor experimented, *has no right to any opinion*, and the sooner he is told this in no uncertain manner, the better for himself and others. The silly superior smile with which so many men and women meet these questions by an arrogant, " I don't believe in any of that kind of nonsense," is as exasperating as it is foolish. For a long time I kept positively silent on such occasions or made some inane and unintelligible murmur in the interests of peace. Now I invariably say, " No, I don't suppose you would believe. Why should you believe in anything you have not yet studied ? I hope *I* should not be so foolish as to believe under similar conditions." So far I have not yet come upon any

single case where the " superior person " making such a remark has studied the subject seriously. Had he done so, he would probably have said, " It is quite true, but it is the Devil," which, although dogmatic, is at least a more reasonable position to take up.

When it has become an acknowledged fact that psychic science must be studied as strenuously as any other science, and with as much devotion to truth, we shall be delivered from these exceedingly tiresome and exasperating people, and be no longer tempted to sacrifice Truth in the interests of Courtesy, when dealing with them.

During the last year we have had a very striking example of what can happen when Spiritualism " runs amok," without experience or wisdom, or scientific *flaire* to restrain its wild vagaries. The whole subject has been dragged through the mud in all our public papers, both English and foreign, and who can wonder that it should be so, under the circumstances ?

A generous-minded but over-credulous chief in the hands of over-credulous and less generous-minded *employés*, has given us indeed a terrible lesson, not only as regards the pitfalls to be avoided, but also as regards the unfortunate fact that the innocent must often bear the burdens of the guilty and that the Folly of the Few must be

expiated by the many, who are sane and well-balanced and anxious to conduct these researches in the most moderate and sensible manner.

Outsiders do not discriminate in these matters—we are all put down as members of the same Body, and must be content to bear the consequences of those unruly members who pledge our credit and bespatter our cause with mud.

It is impossible that these "regrettable incidents" can occur without bringing the wise as well as the foolish under condemnation—without putting back the clock indefinitely and including all alike in the well-deserved reprobation that has followed the quite unnecessary catastrophe.

When people take themselves too seriously, as Delphic oracles, from whose pronouncements there can be no appeal; when they become self-hypnotized and self-sufficient, living in a tiny *milieu* of mutual admiration, and suffering in consequence from what the French euphoniously designate as *Tête gonflée*, then we may be quite sure that they alone will not suffer from their foolish self-delusions. The inevitable day of reckoning will arrive when the gates of their Fool's Paradise will be opened, and the flaming sword of Good Common Sense will bar the entrance for a certain period at least. The misfortune is that the same flaming sword will attempt to keep

sane and sensible investigators from pursuing their own paths in peace and quiet, fearing that these also must inevitably lead some day to a like Pandemonium of Sentimental Delusions, and, worse still, of Spiritualistic rooks, on the look out for psychic pigeons; or rather for psychic *gulls*.

And at this crisis, to which I have referred, to whom could we look for Light and Guidance? Not one voice was publicly raised to warn the tyros and the unwary, that this was not the type of research to be desired. Not an authoritative word was said in the interests of those numberless persons just setting forth on the quest, who were naturally shocked and grieved beyond expression to find that this sort of investigation could be winked at and tolerated by those from whom they had hoped to gain Truth and comfort and consolation, under the heavy burdens and sorrows of mortal life.

Many single notes of protest were sounded, it is true, but not one was allowed a public hearing—not one, that is, whose voice had not been toned down to the approved level of easy toleration, and the "live and let live" that shelters behind all similar inaction.

I have personally received dozens of letters from almost entire strangers, writing in bitterness of heart and spirit to say how much their hopes had

been raised, and how cruelly they had been dashed to the ground, by the unfortunate collapse of an enterprise which had promised so well—and so much. Yet those who were so placed as to be able to make an effective protest (which need have had nothing personally offensive about it) declined to speak.

The gag was put on most effectually, and the protesters were left to possess their souls in such patience as their philosophy could provide.

These careless guardians of the psychic flock have never lacked courage to point out abuses which have occurred *outside* the limits of the sheep-fold. Therefore, we have surely the right to expect an equal vigilance when the danger arises nearer home. The argument that if people mean well, their actions must never be criticized unfavourably, is obviously absurd. Where such actions involve the happiness and security of others, it is our bounden duty to speak words of warning; and this can be done with all due courtesy and consideration for those "through whom the offence cometh."

If those whose task it has been to guard the Psychic Realm have failed in this duty, or evaded their responsibilities, then it is high time that some one else should—not replace but—supplement them.

If Spiritualists, as a whole, cannot see their way to gaining sufficient courage and sufficient wisdom to condemn unworthy methods or unwise proceedings, where these are mixed up with the personalities of those whom it may seem inexpedient to offend, then I think we have every right to call upon the Scientists who are engaged in this Research, to come forward as guides and teachers, as well as experimenters.

It may seem a bold and even an unreasonable demand, but the old saw is very true—If we ask nothing, we get nothing; and we have not asked until we have had good reason to despair of any other help.

Side by side with the investigation of the other sphere, will come as a by-product, more and more light thrown upon the laws and conditions which regulate this, as they regulate all other portions of the Cosmos. Who is likely to know more of these laws and conditions than the man who, combining scientific acumen and intuition with patience and understanding in psychic paths, can warn us against an illusion or deceptive appearance here, a will-o'-the-wisp there, an unconscious self-suggestion, or outside suggestion that is falsifying our whole results, and last, not least, against supposing that Honour and straightforward plain and true speaking are less needed in dealing with

the psychic, than with the material matters of this outer world ? We want men and women who will say these things without fear and without favour—who have no special axe to grind except the axe of Truth at any cost—who will have no unworthy fear of causing offence to the very persons who would honour them the most, for steering a straight course without shifting or trimming.

We want men and women who don't care whether this or that report is true or false, but who do care enormously that they individually should endorse no story, however fascinating and interesting as regards the other side of life, unless it be *true*.

And we want all this combined with a largeness of sympathy and clearness of outlook, which must ever be the *plus* to the equally but not *more* valuable qualities of the Psychical Researcher as he or she at present exists in Hanover Square.

It is asking a great deal, but not too much in the face of present needs. The very fact that these needs exist, and have been so undeniably proved to exist during the last few months, is surely the earnest and the " Sure and certain Hope " of our obtaining that which we require so urgently. It is the very strength of our need that is the measure of our Hope—nay of our Confidence—that we shall obtain what is so indispensable.

The Psychic Realm

Not long ago a man told me he had asked a scientific friend—a science master in a well-known public school—what he thought of Sir Oliver Lodge's standing, etc., in the world of Science—"He is a good man of course in his own line, but there are other men as good," was this man's reply to the question. This may, or may not be the case; but I venture to affirm without fear of contradiction, that in one way Sir Oliver Lodge is certainly unique, and this fact I believe to lie at the bottom of the universal and sometimes, perhaps, almost wearisome adulation he receives. There is no other man in Europe, of his high scientific standing, who has also, not only such an open mind, *but such an intuitive perception of possibilities of Truth in other fields than those with which he is most intimately in touch.*

What we need in our Psychic Realm is another man of that calibre, with these qualities, so rarely combined (the scientific, the intuitional, and the sympathetic), who has the enthusiasm and the leisure to devote his life to guiding this great movement which has come into the world, and which has come to stay. We have many already in the field of *investigation*, who are doing grand work there. Side by side with this work, there is another great work to be done, and at present there is no one to whom we can look to do it.

Our Gold Mine and how to Work It

We want an educated and cultivated man with wide sympathy, keen scientific instinct, strong balance, and well-developed intuitional *flaire*, to blaze our trees for us in the Psychic Jungle—to put up our boards of *No Thoroughfare* where a morass or a blind alley is in question—a man who has the organizing instinct also, and time to plan and carry out many methods (which need not be enumerated here) through which the Light and Guidance needed may come to us. In a word we want another Sir Oliver Lodge—*minus* the Birmingham University!

Emerson declares that we get all that belongs to our spiritual estate—that it is bound to come to us through the very fact of our need of it. Let us trust the same Law holds good in the Psychic Realm. If so, we may be sure that this Admirable Crichton will appear! Who knows how soon?

CHAPTER II

THE IDEAL INVESTIGATOR

ALTHOUGH no one of us may have the good luck, individually, of coming across the Ideal Investigator, that need not deter us from putting down in black and white what we consider should be his most obvious qualifications. Strict accuracy in our psychical experiments, both in the making and recording of them: a stern resolve to eliminate the personal equation to the utmost limit of possibility: a determination to record every fact in our experiments or research, however trifling it may appear at the moment, and an equally strong determination to stretch no fact by the millionth part of an inch in the direction of our personal prejudices—all these are moral, as well as psychical and scientific qualifications. Therefore I would base my description of the Ideal Investigator on moral conditions, knowing that these must, in their very essence, encourage those qualities which make for the true scientific equipment. These conditions will include a stern

and unwavering love of Truth in the smallest details —an evenly balanced mind—a keen sense of logic and a passionate desire for fair play all round; specially towards those who differ from us or who may have wounded our *amour propre.*

These are the elementary necessities for one who would add one pebble to the cairn of scientific achievements in these fields of modern research. A strong moral soil is really the matrix from which our scientific instinct must spring.

It is doubtless true that many scientists, whilst possessing these virtues in more or less marked degree where their individual work is concerned, appear to lose them with alarming facility outside the study or laboratory. Well! we must learn to rejoice over half a loaf as better than no bread at all!

Every one knows that a worthy Love is the most redemptive Force in the world; and the scientist who loves his work sufficiently to evolve these virtues, even as regards that work alone, stands for a witness to this truth.

At the same time we must, above all things, remember in Psychical Research, that we are not dealing with chemicals, nor with finely tempered instruments, nor even etherealized forms of matter *only,* but with Human Beings—incarnate and discarnate—with their thoughts, passions, emotions,

and springs of action; all of which are variable qualities as well as quantities.

Nevertheless, all these must be taken into account when weighing evidence or preparing tests.

Therefore we come at once to a plane, where scientific methods will no longer be limited to strict measurements and accurate observations and mechanical instruments (kept in immaculate conditions of cleanliness and efficacy), but must be concerned with the moral equivalents of these.

The strict measurements will apply here to the various qualities of the medium or agent in any experiment undertaken—the accurate observation will be needed to show how far these qualities must be discounted in judging results—and obviously, the highest condition of cleanliness obtainable in the instruments used will find its correspondence in searching for that *rara avis*, a person of moral integrity and, if possible, some intellectual development, combined with psychical capacity; capacity to function through channels not yet recognized as normal to the Race in general.

Our only serious organization for Research at present is the often abused but doggedly persevering Society of Psychical Research, whose Headquarters, as most people know, are at 20 Hanover Square.

The Ideal Investigator

This Society, started on purely scientific lines, has certainly achieved some very valuable results during the last twenty-seven years of its life.

The S.P.R. has shown us what can be achieved by strict adherence to the *letter* of scientific method without (*as a rule*) that quality of imaginative sympathy which was so invaluable an asset in the case of Mr. Frederic Myers (one of its original Founders), and which enabled him to win the confidence and therefore the confidences of so many persons of vastly differing social and intellectual standing.

I remember once presiding at a small luncheon party, when Mr. Myers had kindly accepted our invitation—at some considerable inconvenience to himself—in order to meet the wishes of an invalid brother of mine who was debarred from all ordinary society. On this occasion a lady, who made the fourth at our table, was giving some remarkable, but rather vague, experiences of hers, connected with an old ruin.

Mr. Myers very gently and tactfully drew the whole story from her, making an encouraging comment from time to time, but absolutely no critical remark. I noticed, however, that he made an arrangement to meet her again and put it down in his notebook.

After the guests had left us, my brother expressed much interest and pleasure in having met

Mr. Myers and admiration of his social charm and qualities, but also disappointment in finding him so much less *critical* than he had expected, pointing out the weak points in our friend's story of her experiences in the old ruin, experiences which Mr. Myers had appeared to accept without demur.

I told my brother that there was no need to worry on this score. Had Mr. Myers interrupted the recital by these very obvious and legitimate objections or shown incredulity, he would probably have hopelessly confused and would most certainly have silenced the narrator. I was able to assure my brother that when the next meeting took place Mr. Myers would most assuredly gently insinuate all possible criticisms—that he knew to an inch how much rope he had just paid out to her to-day, and would have it all back again, carefully annotated, before he had finished with the lady!

Whilst giving the S.P.R. full credit for unflagging energy and much good work in the past, it is impossible for any intelligent outsider not to realize *how much more good work* might have been done had the Society possessed more men and women, as working members, with just this invaluable combination of the scientific with the sympathetic attitude, the scientific being always Senior Partner in the Firm, *bien entendu*. Hitherto,

unfortunately, the two things have been generally considered incompatible, and scientists have too often been morbidly self-conscious in their efforts to show that no crumb of sympathetic intuition has been allowed to enter into their relations with the very people upon whom they must depend for the material to be woven by their looms into the Psychical garment of the Future. But how unfortunate has been this misconception or this limitation ; whichever way we choose to look upon it—again a case of blindly following the letter whilst ignoring the spirit.

A sympathetic attitude and an intuitional perception of true and false are the very Rock-bed upon which any such Research must primarily depend ; and to dismiss these as something not only unnecessary, but in the highest degree undesirable, is the very acme of well-meaning but unenlightened ignorance.

It is true that these are rare and beautiful qualities, not always to be procured for the asking, even by the most enlightened scientist. We do not ask or expect impossibilities or that a man should " make himself over again," as the Americans say, when he leaves the paths of Physical Science for those of Psychical Science, which lead further up the mountain side. Qualities so rare and so valuable are a question of the slow

growth of character, and cannot be grasped through mere intellectual *tours-de-force*.

Many people have been looked upon as impatient and unreasonable and unscientific in past years, because they have criticized—sometimes too severely—the well-intentioned and extraordinarily persevering labours of the Society for Psychical Research. Very often, no doubt, such criticisms *have been* unreasonable and impatient and ignorant, and the Society has pointed out from time to time with much truth that here as elsewhere "most haste" means often "least speed," and that it is only by the slow and wearisome and conscientious accumulation and sifting of evidential facts that any real progress can be made.

This is indisputable. On the other hand, I think the critics have also been often justified, because a real ground for dissatisfaction lay at the bottom of their apparently unreasonable remarks. If, instead of "heaving half a brick" at the Society whenever its name was mentioned, they had analysed the real ground of their complaints and had shot a pointed arrow from their Bow, it would with much more certainty have hit the Bull's-eye. After giving generous appreciation for hard work and disinterested work, and often for extreme intelligence as well as conscientious labour, I think there is only one real and sound objection that

can be raised against the methods of the Society as a whole.

They have not yet realized, as a whole, and have certainly taken an unconscionably long time to realize even as individuals, that whilst the scientific *instinct* must be the same in every field of research, the special methods through which that instinct is developed and allowed to work must, of necessity, differ with the plane upon which the work is being carried on. So long as physical sciences were alone involved, this truth has been axiomatic. Every intelligent person can see for himself that we don't measure gases with the kitchen scales; but when the plane of Research has been shifted from the Physical to the Psychic, it seems impossible for many intellectual people to realize that we are no longer dealing with physical amounts and physical results, and cannot possibly conduct a psychical experiment on identical lines with a chemical one. This is the more remarkable because all of us—scientific or non-scientific—are fully prepared to deal with ordinary psychical facts upon a psychical and not a physical basis. A husband does not attempt to measure his love for his wife or her love for him in the kitchen scales, nor even in the chemist's finely adjusted balance. A father—scientist or non-scientist—learns by bitter experience to make

ample allowance in his calculations in daily life for the moods and fancies of his offspring—their tempers and their terrors. Every man knows that the most reasonable and considerate woman will become fractious, unreasonable, and capricious, under the strain of special physical conditions. Is it any marvel that the highly sensitized channel known as a *medium*, under the strain of special psychic conditions, must be treated with equal forbearance and patience ?

It may be said that the S.P.R. is learning that truth, and we rejoice to acknowledge that this is the case; but I think they must admit that they have not, as a Body, been very apt scholars in this special direction, and that those who *have* learned the lesson, have done so as a matter of personal experience and prejudice, rather than through any whole-hearted recognition of the Truth as one of universal application and a necessary scientific condition in this department of knowledge.

Again we do not only need the accumulation of facts, but far more urgently the accumulation of people competent to deal with these facts. And here again I think the Society has not always been very fortunate. Mr. Myers was of course a brilliant exception who has served to emphasize the rule. Even his remarkable intuition in certain directions and his magnificent capacity both for

synthesis and analysis in sifting his facts, had their limitation. I remember on one occasion when a friend of his—a very estimable member of the Society—was to be sent down to investigate a case of House Haunting, which I had been instrumental in bringing to his notice, I asked naturally, "Has Mr. X. any clairvoyant or clairaudient power that will enable him to check the accounts received from the present occupants?" And his answer was a rather impatient, "Oh, dear, no! Nothing of the sort—he makes no claim to anything of that kind," as if this were decidedly in his favour as a trustworthy investigator. But it is obvious that an Investigator who *had* some such powers would be infinitely more valuable, granted of course that he possessed also the equally necessary qualities of a balanced and sane judgment and honesty of purpose.

Another great drawback to the efficiency of the Society is of course the fact that any real psychical power possessed by its members, is so limited in area that it can be summed up on the fingers of one hand, and that the only psychical investigations which really count for much in the proceedings of the Society, are undertaken by so small a circle of practical workers. It is impossible for an outsider to say whether this is the fault of those who represent the workers at present, or the fault of

those who have been invited to join them and may have refused to do so. I know certain members and associates who would certainly have responded to an invitation, had it been given, and who have expressed disappointment at not being invited to share the labours of the Elect Few. There may be adequate reasons for drawing the experimental net so close, but it is certainly to be deplored for many obvious reasons. To be merely asked to provide the ingredients, and never invited even to give the time-honoured stir to the pudding, is certainly depressing, as every child knows.

I cannot help thinking that many more members and associates would become keen and by degrees educated workers for the Society, if they were given some greater personal stake in the proceedings. We all know that a percentage on sales tends to increase the sales very considerably in every big establishment.

As it is, the vast bulk of the members are content to look on and let the chosen few do all the work and reap all the kudos. They know there are some half-dozen active members whose exertions will be accepted and appreciated, in psychological experiment, and they are willing to enter at second hand into the labours of these few and fervent workers, by reading more or less carefully the thick volumes of *Proceedings* which appear from time to time.

The Ideal Investigator

It was started as a *Society for Psychical Research*, but has become too much, in the past, a "*Society for looking on at Psychical Researchers.*" This has naturally been especially the case since Mr. Myers' personality and influence have been removed from it as a Visible Force.

I think we may discern the dawn of a brighter day at Hanover Square. Every one of the working contingent there has shown, in turn, some traces of ordinary Humanity where a special personality who has gained the confidence of an investigator is concerned.

In fact, this is one of the drawbacks which all of us must confront and endeavour to neutralize in our researches. So soon as we have reached the point with any medium, of adjustment and harmony, so necessary for the best results (whether the medium be professional or non-professional), we have unfortunately also reached the point where our personal feelings have been warmed up to an appreciation—sometimes amounting to strong affection—and the Danger Signal must be run up !

Even in the *Proceedings* of the Society, which are monumental in their evidence of careful and exhaustive analysis and passionate desire to hold the scales evenly, we can see Human Frailty creeping in now and then—here as elsewhere.

I don't think any *outsider* (and therefore more

or less unprejudiced person) who has toiled through these records, will accuse me of an unfair remark, when I say, that had such a record of cross correspondences of exactly similar value been handed in by duly accredited experimenters, but in the *outer* rather than the *inner* circle of Psychical Research, far more allowance would have been made for Thought Transference between the operators, and far less emphasis would have been laid upon coincidences in verbal expression. These are at times stretched almost to breaking-point. To illustrate my meaning; in one instance I have in mind, a description is given clairvoyantly by one of the Inner Circle (at a distance) of a place which I happen to know very intimately. This description is endorsed as a " complete success " by another member of the I.C., who is certainly one of the most distinguished and most transparently honest members of the whole Society. Yet to *me* (knowing the place far better than this latter person could have done at the time) the description is so poor on the whole—the hits so vague and the misses so definite—that I should without hesitation have put it down as a " very partial success and probably covered easily by Thought Transference " either from the owner of the place or the Endorser of the description—both of whom were known by reputation (and perhaps personally)

to the clairvoyante. I feel convinced that the person who marked this account as a success would have been a great deal more critical had (he or she) been the percipient.

I am not accusing the S.P.R. of any conscious drop from their own high standard of evidence—I only say that even these people, who are loyally endeavouring (as I most conscientiously believe) to eliminate to the utmost all possible sources of error, are yet obviously less critical of their own and each other's results than they would be in independent cases.

I think this must be so—we may even plead that we are justified in the position.

For obvious reasons we can be more sure of our own *bona fides* than those of other people, and we have also, perchance, some strong sense of identity when sitting with Mrs. Piper for a Myers or Hodgson control, which is necessarily absent when merely reading of another person's experience under like conditions.

I make all due allowance for such factors, but the truth remains, and what I am leading up to is this. As with the best and most loyal intentions even the S.P.R. cannot eliminate their own Human Nature, would it not be well for them to get the benefit as well as the disadvantages of it ?

We *cannot* altogether rid ourselves of some little

prejudice in favour of our own tests and our own mediums—it may be a speck of prejudice no bigger than a pin's point; yet to that extent it will vitiate and cloud our results.

Therefore why not admit frankly, freely, and without false shame or self-conscious mental gymnastics, such an amount of receptivity and (if we are lucky enough to possess it) such an amount of sympathetic intuition, as form the elementary conditions for obtaining grist for the Psychic Mill?

The general assumption, until quite of late years, has been that these qualities are unscientific, and therefore to be deprecated rather than encouraged. This shows in the Past an absolute misconception of the whole essence and meaning of Science and scientific methods—and a lamentable mental confusion, in speaking too often as though sympathetic comprehension and credulous superstition were identical.

Surely the *scientific* method for any investigation must consist, first and foremost, *in conducting that investigation under proper conditions and equipped with the necessary implements?*

What should we say of a man who arrived to make astronomical observations armed with a scalpel or a botanizing tin, or a collection of glass jars and retorts, and who defended his position

by saying that he had hitherto found these implements of essential value in scientific research and did not propose to make any alteration in his scientific methods? We should naturally say that the poor man was a lunatic, and had evidently overstrained his head and nerves in his previous studies and investigations.

Yet this is exactly what has happened, with very few notable exceptions, in Psychical Research!

The scientist has come to it—if at all—armed with the mental paraphernalia which has hitherto sufficed him, obstinately determined to add nothing to his outfit, and still more obstinately determined to denounce those who see further than himself in these matters.

We *cannot* deal with the human heart and its emotions as we deal with the human body and its disturbances; and the sooner we realize this fact, the better for all of us. And in this Research we are continually dealing with human emotions, mental and spiritual conditions, and a whole continent of hitherto unknown and undreamed-of forces.

It is well for us surely to be humble and teachable rather than self-confident and superior and condescending in face of this fact?

I have sometimes amused my idle moments by wondering what would happen if some machinery

could be invented for disintegrating ultimate human atoms and reconstructing them! Suppose, for example, that we could take Mr. W. T. Stead, Mr. Everard Feilding, Mr. Piddington, and Mr. Hereward Carrington, pass them through the disintegrating machine (which would of course disintegrate mental, psychical, and spiritual as well as the coarser physical atoms), and then begin the scheme of reconstruction; blending the various atoms in more balanced combinations. What would be the outcome?

I believe we should find FOUR ADMIRABLE AND QUITE IDEAL PSYCHICAL RESEARCHERS as the result of that, alas, impossible experiment! Men of large sympathies, wide outlook, and strong judgment.

I am not sure that there would be quite enough intuition to go round; but Mr. Stead would certainly produce enough of that Charity which "*believeth all things*" for the whole quartette, whilst the other three between them would amply supply that saving sense of humour which diminishes our chances of error by preventing us from taking ourselves too seriously.

This may be an appropriate place for pointing out some rocks which are so skilfully hidden from sight that the ordinary investigator is apt to ignore them until he has run the good ship "Re-

search" straight upon them, and learnt a hard lesson from that best of teachers, Experience. He will then be in a position to make his own chart and warn others off the dangerous spots. It is to be feared, however, that his fellow-investigators will be slow to accept his good offices—we are all too apt to think that the channel which has proved disastrous to others is safe enough for us, and that *we* shall never find our ship aground through any such cause.

Those who have made even an elementary study of mental science will endorse me when I say that if four or five investigators are in close daily association with each other in psychical experiments, after the channels of organized sixth-sense impressions have been opened between them, their several mentalities will become, by degrees, so intertwined and interwoven that we must take for granted that these minds, even when separated in space, will be apt to reproduce the impressions of each member of the group. To take an easy illustration; when a certain note is sounded in a room any glass tuned to that exact note will at once respond. We have all in turn been delighted and astonished by this fact in physics, and it is the same in psychics.

This truth needs to be continually held in mind as regards automatic writing, under such conditions.

We know that all such writing takes on some colouring matter from the channel through which it passes; but where a few friends are constantly together in this research and are continually receiving automatic messages "independently" on the same subject, these messages very quickly cease to be independent, even though one member of the group may be in Scotland and receive his message in Edinburgh, and the other may be in London or Oxford and receive his message *there*. We will suppose that two members of some such group are in perplexity as to whether they shall accept or reject some application made to them. They put their heads together over it and then A has the brilliant suggestion to make that as he and B will be in different counties next week, each shall then "independently" endeavour to get a message from the unseen friends on the subject. They carefully abstain from mentioning the hour for the experiment so that there shall be no chance for that Bugbear "Thought Transference."

The results appear overwhelmingly conclusive. They compare notes and the same advice is given to both A and B, in spite of the fact that neither had any special bias when they parted, and that they have held no correspondence with each other since. As an extra, though apparently quite unnecessary test, they write to their friends C and

D and beg *them* to ask for light on the subject separately. C is living in London and D in a distant suburb. Astounding to relate, the C and D automatic messages accurately endorse those received by A and B. Could anything be more conclusive and final? Surely the worst kind of sceptic must be silenced by such phenomena! It is far beyond the reach of Coincidence, and must surely indicate as definitely as anything Human *can* indicate, that an outside Intelligence has been guiding the four pens?

Unfortunately they have forgotten, or have never realized, that a small group of students have been working together day by day for weeks or months, tuning up their various mentalities to the same note just as musicians in an orchestra tune up their fiddles, and that to touch one string is to touch all. Let us imagine that A sits down in Edinburgh one morning and thinks to himself, "Now I have a few minutes free. I will see what they tell me about that application—whether it will be wise or unwise to entertain it. Then one of two things happens. In the rare event of A being a real automatic writer, he may receive advice—wise or otherwise—from a discarnate friend or adviser or, as is more likely, some passing impression sets his pen or pencil moving and the message is received from his

subconscious self. B may or may not follow suit in London—that depends upon his engagements at the moment; but in any case, when he does sit down for the same purpose it is not to be wondered at that he repeats the message. Then C and D are communicated with later, and by that time the combined mentalities of A and B (who have already discussed the "extraordinary coincidence") are handed on with double strength to C and D, and the circle is completed.

This is where a little knowledge is a very dangerous thing, for it enables us to make experiments and print marvellous results without the fuller knowledge that would stay our pen until we have duly considered all the circumstances under which these apparently marvellous results were obtained.

I remember meeting many years ago, in America, an English lady (I think it was the Mrs. Blackwell whose husband illustrates the Royal Academy catalogues), and she told me that when she and her husband were first married, it amused them to notice how often when he returned home to dinner he would tell her of some incident or book or subject he had been thinking out which had not been mentioned between them in the morning, but which would quite suddenly occur to her "out of the blue" during the course of the day

and his absence. She said, " Now that we have been married for some years this is of such constant occurrence that we have ceased to notice it or be interested in it."

It is the same law (a very aggravating one at times) which leads to so many " crossing letters " between dear friends or attached relatives. One sits down to write and by and by the impulse is conveyed to the other. This happens in a more or less sporadic fashion; but if persons whose letters are continually crossing under ordinary conditions, elected to study psychic phenomena in pairs or groups, it would behove them to be exceedingly careful before accepting coincidental results as evidential.

We must also remember that where one uncritical and inexperienced person can do some harm to the cause of scientific investigation in this way, five or six uncritical and self-hypnotized minds, always working together and under similar limitations, will do much more than five or six times the amount of damage.

It is a case of compound interest and not of simple addition. Such persons will never become Ideal Investigators.

It is said that Charity begins at home, and our scientific friends declare that Psychical Science should do likewise. This is perfectly legitimate;

nay absolutely necessary from the truly scientific point of view. I believe Sir William Crookes has said, that although he has nothing to retract from his former experiments and convictions, yet, if he were beginning his researches on these subjects to-day, he would certainly begin with Telepathy rather than with Materialization. As a matter of fact, he took what came in his way and certainly made the very best of it. We can, however, quite understand that, as a scientist, he would have *chosen* to investigate first, the extension of the domain and powers of the *Incarnate* before going further afield and beginning experiments with the *Discarnate.*

This is, without doubt, the proper sequence to observe, where choice is possible ; and a vast and almost virgin soil is here presented to the energetic labourer.

I would now suggest that much of the friction and mutual misunderstandings between the psycho-scientific and the psycho-spiritualistic camps, has arisen mainly from two causes.

The former have not realized that people more gifted with psychical capacity than themselves, or the world at large, cannot be compelled to discard these gifts and possibilities, and endeavour by artificial restrictions to atrophy the very senses through which the greatest joy and happiness and

consolation of their lives may be coming to them, in order to keep strictly within the lines of general scientific conclusions, at any given time.

We will imagine a young man, whose father has gone to India or Australia. A letter from the father is handed to him one morning, but a metaphysical or psycho-scientific friend is at hand and implores him not to read it, lest some evil-minded person may have tried to palm off a cruel joke upon him by copying his father's handwriting, with the accuracy of a forger.

It may be pointed out—quite reasonably—that such a person might have scraped acquaintance with the father, and might even have gone to stay in the house or bungalow, with the sole object of absorbing the local colour and surroundings; being thus in a position to carry out the cruel and meaningless deceit.

Whilst you are suggesting these and a dozen other *impossible possibilities*, what is the young man doing? Is he even listening to you? Certainly not—if he be wise. He is opening and reading his letter and finding in it ample proof that it is from the parent who professes to have written it. Yet he cannot transfer this conviction—nor even the grounds upon which it rests—to his straw-splitting and ultra-metaphysical and scientific companion. The handwriting certainly *might* be

copied by a clever and accomplished forger. The details might all have been worked up by an unscrupulous guest in the distant home. Even motive might be suggested; in any case its apparent absence would be no final argument. But the *spirit* of the communication, the sense of identity, so subtle yet so absolute, the recipient cannot pass these on to his critical companion. He reads his letter and lets the other man talk to the air!

. . . . .

Now this is just how many of us feel when invited to prove to the satisfaction of a scientific friend, that we have unmistakable evidence for the presence of our discarnate friends and for their power of reaching us. Failing to do this, he may and probably will, urge us to put all such unproved nonsense out of our heads and allow him to lead us gently through the primrose path of telepathic and photographic experiments, made with those who are still in the flesh. This is just where the friction and the misunderstanding arise.

On the other hand, why should it not be possible to arouse the scientific instinct in those who are already blessed with the power of seeing and hearing the friends whom they have *lost*—as we used to call it?

I am often surprised by finding how few people

have any real sympathy with any stage of development and achievement in these subjects, except their own!

"Oh, we knew all that years ago! That is mere child's play to me! How stupid to go on making these silly experiments in Thought Transference at this time of day! Why, I can hear my friends *speak* and get pages and pages of writing and all sorts of tests as well." Or another says, "*I* can see a dozen friends who have passed over, as clear and solid as possible, whilst these good people are disputing and discussing as to whether the footman at B—— House really saw a ghost, or only told a lie about it, after hearing tales in the village, in order to account for having fallen downstairs with the tray and smashed all the best china."

This is the type of remark one hears so constantly, and yet it always comes to me as a surprise. It seems so unnatural to have no sympathy with the purely scientific as distinguished from the personal note—no feeling of corporate delight and gratification, when another hard-won victory is announced upon that field, *where alone such victories can be marked down as adding to the Racial Knowledge of Mankind.*

To take a simple example of what I mean. Some months ago, there was an extremely inter-

esting and critical meeting of the S.P.R. in London.

The members and associates of the Society were gathered together to hear a very important paper read by Mr. Everard Feilding, on his late investigations with Eusapia Palladino, in conjunction with Mr. Hereward Carrington and Mr. Baggaly; the latter of whom was present. Infinite pains had been taken to make the experiments clear to every one present by reproducing the original situation so far as possible during the reading; with the result, one would have supposed, that every one present was both interested and also somewhat amused.

Now, I belonged to the S.P.R. for fifteen years, but am not now connected with the Society, and am probably not a *persona grata* with any of the active members of it. But what has that to do with the matter? How can *any one* help being interested when a big Society of this kind makes one definite step forward, through experiments made under absolute test conditions, and by men whose *bona fides* is beyond question?

Yet my enthusiastic pleasure was damped down that very evening, in several significant quarters, by such remarks as the following:

"Oh, yes! but, after all, how absurd it all is! Every one has experimented with Eusapia for

years and knows she can do all that and a great deal more! There are dozens of mediums who can do far more than Eusapia and in the same direction too!"

Quite true—but that is not the point. The point is, that a large and influential Society has at length made one step in advance on its lengthy —perhaps too lengthy—march towards unfolding the mysteries of our Being. The convictions and experiences of a thousand private individuals will not carry the weight of that one little step forward, made by the Society *as a whole.*

That is why we rejoice and realize that we have seen one more example—however infinitesimal—of the great evolutionary movement of the world.

If we can only cultivate this spirit and this sympathetic enthusiasm with all stages of psychical development, we shall certainly add fifty per cent to our own happiness and enjoyment, and more than fifty per cent to our usefulness.

And this power of identifying him or her self with the general scientific standpoint, whilst accepting individual gifts and experiences with gratitude, is above all things necessary for the "Ideal Investigator."

Such an attitude must infallibly bring its own exceeding great reward. Here as elsewhere, we shall find that in giving we have received the more

abundantly, both in sympathy and encouragement, and our own little garden plots will bloom all the brighter, when we have learned to look upon them, not as isolated spots of refreshment for our own spirits alone, but as tiny portions of a vast system of agriculture, which in due time, with patience and energy and, above all, with *intelligent sympathy*, will help to make even the wilderness of Human Life to blossom as the Rose.

CHAPTER III

OUTSIDE ASSISTANCE

THE question of outside assistance, as I have called it, is always a vexed subject and one upon which we need wise advice and guidance more than almost any other, in drawing up rules and regulations for our Psychical *Constitution.*

Here as elsewhere, each one must finally appeal to his own judgment, for no one else can know so accurately the conditions of temperament and circumstances which must decide the question in each individual case. There is much to be said in favour of seeking assistance from mediums in whom we have confidence, especially in the beginning of our researches.

Some sharp and sudden loss, or other personal and overwhelming grief, is generally the reason which impels people who have, perhaps, hitherto scorned and ridiculed the subject, or passed it by with indifference, to reconsider their position. Many of these persons possess no marked psychical capacity and may be months in developing it,

even in feeble and fitful fashion. To tell such people never to consult a paid medium is tantamount to shutting the door in their faces.

At the same time there are obvious drawbacks to appealing for outside assistance, whether professional or non-professional. In either case we may be duped ; by the former because he naturally wishes to give you something adequate for your money, and by the latter, because a kind-hearted friend or even acquaintance will wish to help you to the utmost through sheer Humanity, especially if your sorrow is deep and recent. In either case it is impossible to *command* results, and the grief of the applicant and the eager desire for success on the part of the seer will alike prove disastrous so far as getting independent results is concerned. By independent results, I mean of course communications *comparatively* free from the colouring matter provided by the mentalities of the medium and the sitter combined.

These must of course always be allowed for in greater or less measure. It is merely a question of amounts—no water and no air is absolutely pure, but some water and some air is said to be " without impurities," i.e. the standard is as high as it is possible to attain.

The same thing holds good in all mediumship. Of course one is not now considering " sittings "

which from start to finish are mere clever reproductions of the sitter's knowledge or prejudices, as these make themselves perceptible to the strained faculties of an expert in these subjects. "Everything is easy when you know how it is done," and no truer word has ever been spoken as regards mediumship and palmistry *plus* an infinitesimal amount of intuition and the power of putting two and two together without making five. I know this from personal experience, although I have never attempted to take any one in by a faked "sitting" of any kind.

To take a very simple illustration, which has nothing to do with the Unseen.

Some years ago, in Florence, I met a retired military man who told me he lived in one of the Eastern counties, which I knew *very slightly*. He did not say whether he lived north, south, east or west of the county, and had not mentioned the name of the place to me, nor had I ever met any one of his name. The first evening of our acquaintance he happened to be speaking of clergymen, and he inveighed rather strongly against his own parish priest, whom he denounced as a poor preacher and "a bit of a snob," adding, to illustrate his point; "fancy a parson being told off to take down to dinner the daughter of a neighbouring Squire, and saying as soon as they

sat down and the first time he had set eyes upon her: 'Dear me, Miss ——, it's very queer, but there's only one letter different in your name and mine!'" My military friend doubtless felt there could be no indiscretion in telling me this, since I had not the slightest idea where he lived, nor who was his parish priest, or the "neighbouring Squire"—yet in a moment I turned round and said, "I think I can supply both those names." "That I am *quite sure* you cannot," he said confidently, "for you don't know where I live."

"That is true," I said, "but nevertheless I think 'Bacon' is the name of your clergyman, and that he took in to dinner a Miss 'Facon'"—these names are fictitious, but bear some resemblance to the original ones. The poor man's face was a study. I believe he always considered me uncanny after that—yet it was all very simple when you knew how it was done.

A landed proprietor in that county happened to be also a well-known brewer, whose name I had heard, although I did not know where he lived in the county. Years before the Florence episode, I had been staying with a girl friend in the south of England whose father was a rector there. A clergyman quite answering to the description of the parish priest came to stay there for a few days. He made some impression upon me for three

reasons—he had rather an uncommon name; told one or two absurd and decidedly snobbish stories, which were intended to redound to his credit; and thirdly paid a good deal of attention to my hostess, a charming and well-endowed young woman, who had "good taste in everything but men," as I once heard a shrewd old lady say in a similar case. I conceived a feeling of repulsion for the man, and hated to see my friend even listening to him. In a day or two he departed and neither of us ever saw him again; but I suppose my strong distaste accounted for my remembering the *county*—though not the parish—in which he lived. The rest was intuition or a happy hit, whichever you choose to call it; anyway the effect on my Florentine friend was very striking.

Now this is the kind of piecing together which must frequently occur, and which always appears rather miraculous to one who is not behind the scenes of the mental process involved.

Again I remember a case in palmistry which gained me almost as much kudos and which was equally undeserved. As a young woman, I knew the wife and daughters of one of the London stipendiary magistrates slightly; but at the time had never seen the father. One evening I was dining there *en famille* and he and I met—other young people were present and the conversation

happened to turn upon palmistry. They found out that I had a very slight knowledge of the subject—gained chiefly from books. Every one at once wished to test my powers, including the magistrate. He was certainly not a credulous man nor very easily impressed, but he was astounded by the result, and told me I had hit off his character more accurately than any one who had known him for twenty or thirty years could have done. Yet it was easily explained. Certainly, looking back, I think there may have been a small *plus* in this case also, of what we must call intuition, but the main points in my diagnosis rested less upon the lines of his hand than upon my knowledge of an event in his past life, which would be very apt to have a marked effect upon the character, and to some extent a warping effect. There was no mystery in the matter; every one who knew the family was aware of this episode, and he must have known that I knew it also. The lines of his hand did not contradict my hypothesis, but I really built up the whole detail of the character by putting myself in his place and imagining what would be the effect of an act of injustice on a naturally open-hearted and kindly man—*Voilà tout!* This was the machinery, but it was hidden. It was a "walky inside," as the Chinaman used to call the old paddle-boat, and therefore the

outside result seemed very remarkable and very mysterious.

If this sort of mental agility is so successful when employed in a desultory and sporadic fashion, what must it be when constant practice has developed the capacity ? *À force de forger on devient forgeur.*"

This last word, taken literally, is unfortunately suggestive !

Mediums are apt to be more successful in a first interview than later. The client is more interested and naturally more surprised by a favourable result. If the sittings are repeated too frequently, the outcome in the long run is apt to be disappointment, in the case of a sensible and critical client ; though, no doubt, the weaker-minded may become partially hypnotized by a special personality and learn to run to a pet medium in every little trouble or discomfort ; very much as a drunkard runs to his whisky bottle, or a fine lady in the Smart Set to her hypodermic injection of morphia. The goal is much the same in either case ; ease of mind or ease of body—to be taken out of your normal self for the time being—above all to be soothed and flattered and put on good terms with the conscious self, which is apt at times to " turn nasty " and tell us a few home truths, greatly to our annoyance and discomfort.

But the critical sitter will naturally discount more and more from the sittings, when these are repeated.

He will say, quite reasonably, "Mr. X. or Mrs. Y. knows more about me each time I go to the house—they have had extra chances of learning my surroundings through outside sources and extra chances of getting in touch with me mentally, and so of being able to pick out obscure facts from my own inner consciousness."

Unfortunately few professional mediums have the scientific instinct as regards their own achievements. Mr. W. J. Colville is, however, an exception to the rule. They are generally more interested in making a good hit than in analysing the channel through which the information has come that enables them to do so. I think there is even a barely concealed conviction that it is disloyal to the "dear spirits" to make any such analysis. Everything that appears to have any extraneous source at all, is at once put down to "spirit influence" without question, and I have more than once heard the suggestion made that if we are to begin to carp and dispute and bring our stupid incredulity to the front every time, it is unreasonable to suppose that the spirits are going to be more loyal to us than we are to them, and that we have no right to be surprised at, or to resent any

deceiving messages which may be received under the circumstances.

Now to say that an ungenerous and unworthy incredulity will raise a dense atmosphere of doubt which will prove almost impermeable by the finely sensitive spirit who may be present, is perfectly true. Even when permeable at last, under such circumstances, truth and error will probably be mixed up in hopeless confusion. Low and unworthy motives will poison any atmosphere. We need not go to the séance room to demonstrate this truth. Take any roomful of bright and happy people enjoying each other's society, and introduce a cynical and perhaps disagreeable outsider and watch the result. The very words "wet blanket" illustrate my meaning. Such a man distils mental poison around him as another distils sweet fragrance. He is watching and expecting such a one to trip up in his speech and he does trip up. If you speak to him, hoping to make things more genial, he looks at you with a perfectly blank, expressionless face, inwardly intending to put you to mental confusion as quickly as possible, which he generally succeeds in doing. I have felt with such persons as if they were actually building up a wall between themselves and me all the time I was addressing them—a wall from behind which the Sharp Shooters would promptly let fly their arrows

of malice and all uncharitableness. It requires a strong will not to be daunted by this sort of malicious irresponsiveness, and I doubt if you ever succeed in blinding these scratch-cats to the fact that they have made you feel extremely uncomfortable.

All this is true enough, but it has nothing in the world in common with the frank, honest, and quite kindly criticism which, far from wishing to be inhospitable to any passing visitor from the other spheres, would gladly welcome the assistance of such a one in solving the very problems we are discussing.

I have long thought that we are missing grand opportunities for co-operative scientific work by using our spirit friends only as oracles, instead of enlisting their services as co-students. To keep on pestering them to describe exactly their present conditions when we have no language fitted to serve in an exact description of a sphere which must differ from and frequently transcend our own, is obviously absurd. They want to meet our wishes but cannot truthfully do so, and some, no doubt, feel obliged to pander to our unreasonable demands at the sacrifice of strict veracity; but those who were interested in getting at the "reason of things" here, cannot have lost this faculty immediately upon entering the next plane, nor can we suppose

for a moment that they become omniscient through any alchemy of Death. Also there *must* be links, higher physical as well as spiritual, between us, or there can be no continuity; which is unthinkable, in a Universe of order and progress.

There is no need to lose our reverence for the "sheeted dead" as some journalists describe them—whatever that expression may mean—any more than we should lose our reverence for the living, but I think it would be a great gain on both sides if we changed our attitude in other respects. We are bound to reverence every human being (whether he is living here or on the other side of the veil) as made in God's Image and possessing the *potentialities* of that Divine Parentage; but we are not bound to hypnotize ourselves into the belief that every man becomes at once an oracle of wisdom and infallibility, by the mere fact that he has passed on from this Infant School of Earth to the next Form in the Great School of Humanity.

The real fact is that we are *afraid of our unseen friends*—afraid of seeing them—afraid of hearing them; even when convinced of the possibility of holding "an hour's communion with the dead," we are too apt to assume a cringing attitude of uncritical and unquestioning receptivity. We do not "try the spirits"—we simply pander to them, and thus harm them as well as ourselves. Tennyson

wisely says, "*How pure at heart and sound in head*" we should be, if we wish to hold communion with those who have passed from earth. That is for our own protection chiefly. He does not say, "*How weak at heart and dull in head,*" which is too often our equipment for this converse. That is at the root of half our deceptions, and of more than half the dangers against which we are so often warned.

Why not try another tack to make the good, kind, helpful comrade of the past the good, kind, helpful comrade of the present ? Why not suggest to him a partnership in this intensely interesting research ? I believe there are numbers who are only waiting for such an invitation from this side, and who would be only too thankful and happy to be allowed to help us in some such fashion. We have had enough and to spare of mere dogmatic and oratorical effusions from the other side, and even of such excellent and often admirable instructions as those of Imperator, for example, in *Spirit Teachings.*

Such messages have been poured out of late years almost *ad nauseam,* and all labour under the one great drawback. They are of necessity dogmatic in quality, and often of necessity also contradictory in their nature. This is inevitable, and merely means that the progressive creature,

Man, does not cease to be progressive on the other side of Life, and that experiences there are as varied as experiences here, and as dependent upon the temperament and stage of progress of the individual, in either sphere. Also, there is another drawback which is equally obvious. When such communications are made public and given forth with all the dogmatic assurance born of the fact that they have been received from those who have "gone higher," as the phrase is, they are apt to rouse great friction and much disputation. Each man who prints his particular revelation has received it from what is naturally to him an unimpeachable source. A week or two later another equally dogmatic pronouncement comes from the "higher spheres" published "in the interests of mankind" by another fervent disciple, but written from an entirely different moral or intellectual standpoint—and then the music begins!

It is simply the experience over again of the Apostle Paul, when he says in one of his epistles: "How is it then, brethren? When ye come together, every one of you hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, *hath a revelation*, hath an interpretation?" That which I am advocating is something far more modest, and I think less liable to abuse than this—less liable to abuse because all are alike scholars, and no one claims to be the infallible Teacher.

I am very sure that such a man, for example, as Dr. Richard Hodgson—if he has not lost his identity entirely, which we cannot suppose—would only too gladly place his extended powers and capacities at the service of his old comrades on this side ; not only, as no doubt he has already done, in the matter of cross correspondences, but in the equally important questions connected with the higher physical links between our present world and his.

To return for a moment to the question of " outside assistance." From one point of view these late remarks are extremely relevant to my title ; for this also is outside assistance of another kind. But to return to the question of outside assistance from the Incarnate to the Incarnate, through mediumship ; I think the sooner we can learn to dispense with this the better, just as it is well when a growing child can learn to walk without the nurse's or mother's hand. But no child would learn to walk at all without this early help. The case is not quite identical where " psychic children " are concerned. It is often found that the capacity exists, and exists even to a well-developed degree, and yet, owing to the force of circumstances, it may not have been discovered until quite late in life. Under such circumstances it is often found unnecessary to resort to outside assistance at all,

except for good advice in educating these powers, and such advice is not always to be expected from the professional medium. At the same time I have personally known several cases where the best and the most disinterested advice has been given by such persons. This is greatly to their credit when we realize how great must be the temptation to suggest frequent and continuous visits at a guinea an hour. In this way some of the mediums compare very favourably with men in other professions.

I think even a natural psychic, who has only just discovered his or her powers, must always be greatly in need of a helping hand to warn him off the rocks which threaten the tyro, here as elsewhere. But this once conceded, I am quite sure that the "longest way round is generally the shortest way home." Although we may find public mediumship far more interesting and dramatic and sensational, we shall certainly be repaid in the long run for the persevering effort to develop from within, rather than merely accept help from without.

I think the reason why so many who start upon this research so enthusiastically at first, end by indifference, or, in many cases, by actual repulsion, is simply because they have trusted too implicitly to outside assistance. When this fails entirely in the end, or shows signs of becoming exhausted, and is therefore too often supplemented from un-

trustworthy sources, then we turn round in disgust and drop the whole subject, declaring that we have been shamefully deceived and taken in and "can never get any further," as the farmer said about his claret.

But the real fault lies with ourselves. We have been trying to take short cuts and avoid as much personal trouble as possible and we have expected too much, both in quantity and quality, as regards outside help. It was never intended to replace our own exertions, but merely to encourage them, and *we* are to blame when we turn a walking-stick into a crutch.

We don't learn a language by insisting that our master shall write out all our exercises for us or save us the trouble of looking in the dictionary. No doubt the process would be less tedious, and the results at first sight much more satisfactory. Only—we should never learn the language! Why should we not look upon our psychical studies from a similar point of view, and be at least prepared to give as much time and energy to them as we do to painting a landscape or learning to play the violin?

If we do not consider the subject worthy of a methodical and persevering effort, then let us abandon it altogether—for surely here more than elsewhere, is a little learning a very dangerous thing.

Outside Assistance

People start from a wrong conception and seem to think that everything connected with psychical development is outside, not only ordinary laws, but any laws at all! that it can be turned on at any moment and under any set of conditions, and is not amenable to any of the ordinary customs or restrictions of Human Life. This is a very great and a most disastrous mistake. We must learn to keep our appointments with our unseen friends as scrupulously as with those who surround us, more so, in fact, since the latter are less at our mercy in such arrangements. On the other hand we have an equal right to expect courteous treatment at their hands, and we never fail to get it, if we have sufficient self-respect to exact it.

When I hear people say that they have been wakened up at all sorts of extraordinary hours "*to take automatic messages*" or to exercise clairaudient faculties, or that the spirits have suddenly put them into a trance in an A.B.C. shop, to their own confusion and the embarrassment of friends who may be with them at the time, I always feel how completely they are "giving themselves away" by showing the sort of treatment they have allowed to pass unchecked.

A mediumistic person told a gentleman of my acquaintance that during a lecture—to attend which she had travelled many miles—a friend of

mine, who had passed over, had suddenly controlled her hand and started a bombastic message by saying, "I command your hand to give a message to my dear friend Miss Bates." I am quite sure my unseen friend was too courteous to have done anything of the sort, and certainly too humorous to have begun by such a silly, melodramatic announcement. In this particular case I have no doubt at all that the message was conceived in the lady's own subconscious brain and the name of a valued friend tacked on to it, hoping to give extra authority to a course which she herself earnestly desired me to pursue. The greatest stretch of charity can only include possible self-deception in this case. But no self-respecting spirit on either side of the veil would adopt such a method or such a moment for communication.

I do not know how many times I have been asked by perfect strangers, whom I have not even seen, to "get a message for them" from some husband or wife or child who has gone beyond the veil. People seem to think that such a proceeding ought to be perfectly simple, and that if you won't agree to do it for them, you must either be a fraud or a cruelly unsympathetic and selfish person.

Now this sort of request shows the sore need of instruction in these matters. It is true that I have

sometimes received a message for a stranger spontaneously, which has afterwards been proved to be veridical; but in such rare cases there have been almost invariably some links or clues established before the message came. In any case it is a very different thing to receive what comes to you "out of the blue," from sitting down deliberately to get a message for Mr. A. or Mrs. B., whom you have never seen or previously heard of, from a defunct relative with whom you can have no conceivable connection or thought in common.

When my friend, Lady Wincote, once received a very significant message from Sir George Tryon, after his death, he took pains to explain that he had been brought to her through a common "kinswoman" who had been on the other side for many years. This seems to me the courteous and proper way to behave in this sphere or any other.

Of course it will be said: "Then how can professional mediums find out your friends for you?" To begin with, we have to allow for a great deal of Thought Transference, during which operation a sort of link *is* forged between the medium and the relative in the Unseen; and the third person is present on such occasions, and therefore capable of acting as a hostess who introduces the other two.

The conditions are very different from those which obtain when a man writes to you from the wilds of America or Australia, and calmly demands a test message from his friend or relation. Moreover, it is increasingly impossible—especially in the light of recent events—to shut our eyes to the fact that many sittings, even with accredited mediums, seem to show abnormal capacity for reading the reflections in your mind, rather than those of the original personality who has passed from your outer consciousness.

And so the conclusion of the whole matter seems to be that the chances of error are less when you are your own medium, and have the sense of identity to back you up, than when you are dependent entirely upon that outside assistance which at proper times and under special conditions may be so invaluable in starting you on your quest.

You may require a good staff—the stronger the better—in walking through the forest, but your feet were given to you to carry you on bravely. You do not need to limp along on crutches.

CHAPTER IV

NORMAL AND ABNORMAL

SCIENCE and custom have worked together throughout the centuries to teach us that there is no arbitrary line of demarcation between the normal and the abnormal. They are not two distinct coins, but the two faces of the one coin—not two sections but one rounded whole, the sections of which we cut off for ourselves, according to our various nationalities and our various stages of progression.

The abnormal of yesterday is the normal of to-day, and the abnormal of to-day will be the normal of to-morrow. That which is normal to the Englishman of to-day is abnormal to the aborginees of Australia, or the savage tribes of the African swamp. We might expand these illustrations of an obvious truism, *ad infinitum*.

Therefore we see that the abnormal, far from being a fixed quantity, is an ever-shifting peg, that marks out for each man, or for each nation, or for each century of the world's existence, the

new domain that has been conquered by Knowledge and assimilated by Habit and Custom. We have a marvellous faculty for quick assimilation of any new facts in science which have a practical bearing upon our daily life—we accept X-rays, motor-cars, experiments in radium, the practical facilities of electric light, the entire change of social as well as business life brought about through the telephone, the possibilities of aviation, and a dozen other things of the kind, as though all these had been with us for centuries rather than for a few short years. But here the miracle ends, and is replaced by an equally remarkable incapacity for realizing, that what has happened in the past may happen in the future, and that we may be called upon again and again to stretch the limits of our present normal to include a present abnormal. To most minds the latest stage of progress is final, and it is only when a new fact is absolutely in our midst and can no longer be rejected or questioned, that this swift power of assimilation seizes upon it and makes us forget for how short a time we have known it.

If this be so in the practical world, how much more is it the case in the Psychic Realm!

The latter labours under the disadvantage of not being able to produce facts which are *facts for all*, nor to produce facts which shall have at once

a market value for all ; such as the telephone and wireless telegraphy.

This is true, but surely the experiences of the past, where we have seen the Abnormal blending so perfectly and so easily into the Normal, should teach us a lesson of Trust ?

Can we for one moment suppose that the new psychic facts which are coming into the world just now, so speedily and so unmistakably, will find any more difficulty in fitting into their places in the general Scheme of Human Life, than the abnormal physical facts we have experienced ? How could it be so in a Cosmos which is a Unity ?

But we have so little faith ! We shy at each new fact, fearing that it is going to upset the arrangements of the Almighty, and incidentally our own little world. We live in terror of moral earthquakes as well as physical ones, dreading that each shock may mean the end of the world. Yet the world goes on, and the destructive element we dread, proves to have been the forerunner of the constructive element that we welcome.

Can we not have faith enough to trust that this will prove the case in the present upheaval of old traditions ? That the seed, the essence, the *soul* of them can never be lost, since it is immortal as we ourselves ? That it will only be planted in Soil more favourable for its expansion ? We might

as well be in dread and misery and doubt and foreboding, when the gardener takes a cherished plant out of a small pot, that is already crippling its growth, and re-pots it or even puts it boldly into the ground, where the sunshine and the rains will in turn contribute to its future life.

There are no gaps in Nature—the grub becomes the chrysalis and the chrysalis the butterfly—there is no break in the chain of continuity. The "soul of things" runs through all alike, and simply takes on fresh and more ample expression as the need arises.

So there is no one point where we can stand and say, "All on this side is normal—all on the far side is abnormal." The normal to you is the abnormal to the man who knows less than you do. The normal to you of to-day was the abnormal to you of yesterday. It is for us to break down these walls of artificial separation, and to show that they are merely whitewashed lath and not solid stone.

The best work that will be done when our *Psychical Constitution* is signed, will be this work of wall-breaking—of reaching forward to the present *abnormal* in order to include it in the present *normal.*

These are the new kingdoms waiting to be conquered by us, as others have been conquered in the past. And the worst of the fighting (against

narrow-minded prejudice and scientific contempt) is over; so we may hope that the final victories will be won without bloodshed.

At any rate we need no "Dreadnoughts" for this conflict, and cannot be delayed by the cheese-paring policy of any grudging or disloyal government!

The more effectually this At-onement between the two Spheres is brought about, the sooner we may expect a fresh scale of values in Life. Even a millennium ceases to be an impossible dream of a dim Future, when we realize that it will come through no sudden and miraculous change in Human Nature, which is against all precedent, but through new standards which must be the inevitable and natural sequence of new facts, and which will be grounded on a scientific as well as a spiritual basis, since the spiritual and the scientific will then be approaching their true unity.

Hitherto the great mass of people have acted (six days out of the seven at least) as though it were actually a case of "*let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.*" No amount of preaching or teaching has proved capable in the past of moving this inert mass of public opinion as a whole; not even the tradition of One who rose from the Dead. But if, as time goes on, we can develop normally the power of seeing and hearing those who are not

risen from the dead, into our world, but are actually living their own lives and *intermingling with ours here and now*, then there are no limits to the possibilities involved. Certainly new standards must arise automatically from such a situation. The experiences of the Elect Few (from the psychical point of view) have been invariably in the direction of a stern and unwavering teaching, that what is sown here must be reaped in the next sphere of existence—that there is no shirking of consequences through any formula of belief or doctrine; that "Who breaks—pays," and many other salutary truths of the same kind.

There is no uncertain note as to this in any serious communications which I have ever received myself, or read in the experiences of other earnest students. All the irresponsible talk about the "Summer Land" which forms the staple of a good deal of emotional trance utterances on certain platforms or in certain summer camps, cannot be weighed in the balance against the mass of testimony which all great Seers have left to us, from Swedenborg downwards, and which tell us with no uncertain sound, that the Divine Love allows not one of us to shirk his lesson and will chasten us as well as love us, if we attempt to do so.

Many of us have learnt this through the personal

experiences of our own lives ; but how enormously will this experience be corroborated and justified when we have such object-lessons before us as the varying conditions of Life in the next sphere must reveal ; so soon as our psychic senses are sufficiently developed to turn the supposed fancies of the few into the acknowledged and indisputable facts of the many.

This is no idle vision. We are learning more and more of the hitherto undreamed-of possibilities of matter—its disintegration and re-integration, and the startling phenomena which are thereby made possible.

The powers of such mediums as Eusapia Palladino, Mrs. Piper, and many others, have been studied hitherto (quite legitimately) from the standpoint of proving extended Human Faculty and extended Human Existence. The next step will be when they are studied from the more purely scientific ground of deductions and experiments in the physical and the higher physical regions, which are now for the first time made possible by the light incidentally thrown upon these subjects in the search for facts of another order.

A *bona fide* materialized figure is valuable to the Spiritualist or Philosopher because it proves continuity of existence, but the physical scientist

who accepts the phenomenon will see in it a splendid basis for numberless purely physical and higher physical experiments on the integration and disintegration of matter, which may have nothing to do with the more obvious purpose of the special materialization.

When we have learned to look on such phenomena from this secondary point of view, and to realize something at least of what is involved in them, we may confidently expect that the more we know, the more divinely simple and normal will the whole scheme of life appear, and most of us will feel humiliated in remembering the complexities which we have ourselves built up through failing to see the godlike simplicity of the original Plan.

Hitherto we have been searching in a crude and, of necessity, desultory fashion, for abnormal facts; but now that Science has been enlisted in the Research, surely we may hope for better methods and more orderly and satisfactory results?

As I write these words, I have just been reading Professor Willy Reichel's honourable but depressing testimony to the fact that the much-lauded Charles Bailey (the *Apport* medium so well known in Melbourne) has been discovered committing a gross and stupid fraud, i.e. buying birds in Grenoble (where a recent sitting was held) and

then professing to produce these birds as an *apport* from India !

Even Mr. Stanford of Melbourne, who has been such a staunch friend and believer in his phenomena for years past, has had his eyes at length opened by the fact that Bailey produced in Melbourne an Egyptian paper (written in Arabic) professing to be only five days old, and later this was discovered to be *five months old !*

It may be urged that Bailey has had genuine powers, and that he only "assists them" by fraud when depleted by over-exertion. This may or may not be true. In any case it is beside the question. A person of this type is just as much good to us from any scientific point of view in our research, as a chemist would be, who instead of honestly admitting that he had not some special drug in stock at the moment, should set to work to make up a mixture that would look as like it as possible on short notice ! Our scientific-psychics are going to change all this for us, we may earnestly trust.

We are not children to be pleased and amused by a psychic peep-show — we are common-sense investigators *who want truth or want nothing.*

No one who has been connected with this Research for years past, who is of ordinary intelligence, and who has kept his eyes and ears

open, can reasonably doubt that in the laws of the *disintegration and re-integration of matter*, we have an unlimited field of enquiry opening out to us and the means of reducing these apparent miracles of the genuine séance room, to law and order. It may take years of hard work, but at least we may feel that our feet are set in the right path, and with this clue in their hands, surely our scientific friends may speedily deliver us from the charlatans who take advantage of our abounding ignorance of the higher physical laws of matter ?

We see the slower processes of the integration and disintegration of matter on the lower physical plane all round us. It is the commonplace of our lives. Why should it be looked upon as an impossible dream that these processes, when dealing with matter of finer constitution or through more directly etheric media, should be enormously accelerated in time and enormously extended in scope ?

A dear old friend of mine (still alive) who knew *Home* well in old days, and entertained him for days together when living in Scotland, has told me of many interesting phenomena which took place when he and she were quite alone. She is also one of the few living witnesses of his celebrated fire experiments ; for she bravely allowed him to put a large lump of live coal on her head, protected

only by a soft tulle cap. Her daughter, sitting close to her at the time, stretched out her hand with a natural instinct of fear for the mother's safety, and *she* was slightly burnt; but my friend herself suffered no inconvenience at all, although the live coal had been picked out from the very centre of a hot fire. Home would not try this experiment indiscriminately, and the latter incident shows that he was justified in choosing fit subjects for the experience.

My special reason for alluding to this lady, however, is not connected with Home, but with another séance at which she was present, when a very suggestive remark was made to her, by the little "control" on that occasion. I have often heard her tell the story, and have always felt that it held a clue which might some day be followed up with advantage by earnest investigators.

The sitting on this occasion was held on a Saturday evening, and a little child control came from the cabinet and proposed to slip an iron ring on to my old friend's wrist. The child was a little Indian, by the way, and evidently had nothing to conceal in her methods, for she said eagerly, "Look, Squaw Westcott!" (I have changed the name) "see what I do." My friend looked down, and as the iron ring passed on to her wrist (without passing over the fingers) she saw a little blue flame

like an electric spark. It was instantaneous but absolutely unquestionable.

The child then disappeared and a considerable time elapsed before she came out again. The ring meanwhile was extremely and quite uncomfortably tight over my poor friend's wrist, and it was quite impossible to get rid of it by any contraction of the muscles. She called at first in vain for her little tormentor—who was possibly enjoying the joke—and being Saturday night, she remembered with something like despair, that it would be impossible to get it filed off before returning home.

At length, to her great relief, the little Indian child popped out of the cabinet once more—my friend gave her an energetic scolding and bade her take the iron ring off at once. Again the child said, "You look, Squaw Westcott—you see what I do!" Again the momentary spark and the wrist was once more free!

"Now tell me, child, how you do it," said the old lady coaxingly, "try to explain to me what happens."

"Ah, Squaw Westcott!" said the tiny child, "*that is hard for you to understand and for me to tell you—It has to do with the disintegration of matter.*"

Now apart from the oddity of hearing these long words from a child so small that my friend could

only reach her by bending down from her own chair very considerably, it has always seemed to me that here again we may be passing over as "a mere conjuring trick" that which is real enough in certain cases and quite normal also—when once we have learned something of these extended laws of the Psychic Realm.

Before closing this chapter I wish very much to suggest a thought which has always been very strongly impressed upon my own mind.

Surely the *really* abnormal condition is that we should *not know our next-door neighbours*—that Death should not only carry them off, but also slam the door in our faces!

The thing which truly appears to me *abnormal* is that this great gulf should have been fixed between us—not that some are now finding a Bridge to span it.

Doubtless there must have been some good and all-sufficient reason for the prohibition in the past. In trying to find this, let us go back to the ever satisfactory and simple symbol of a father bringing up his children. Young children are not allowed to choose their own companions without any restriction from their parents. Yet, later on, when the boy goes to college and the girl enters society, the barriers must be to a great extent removed, and removed entirely when the man and

the woman have to take on their own responsibilities and live their own lives.

A man whom I knew well in Colombo years ago, who has long since passed to the other side of Life, told me one morning when we were pacing the deck of our steamer together before breakfast, that it had always seemed to him the simplest conception of religion to suppose that the Mosaic Dispensation corresponded with the childhood of the Race ; to the time when young people are told to do this, or not to do that as a lesson in obedience, before they are old enough to judge for themselves or even to realize always the reason for certain prohibitions ; the time when the wisest parent is sometimes obliged to say, " You are not to do this because I tell you not to do it. Some day when you are older and wiser I can make you understand the reason—just now you must trust your parents to know best, and obey them." This corresponds with the age of Law — the age of the Pentateuch and other Books of the Law.

Then with the New Testament—with Jesus Christ—came the further liberty of the growing boy or girl, able to realize something of the reasons for parental prohibitions in the past, and to see how many pitfalls have been avoided by observing them, and the inevitable misery and disaster which have always attended their neglect. This

may truly be called the Age of LOVE ; the revelation of the Love of the Father—no longer simply the LAW-giver, but the LOVE-giver — the Law-giver *because* the Love-giver. All this, Jesus the Christ came to reveal to us, at that age in the world's evolution when childhood merges into youth.

And, my friend added, we are just emerging now into the age of manhood, when a man must take up his full responsibilities and may be trusted with greater powers and with the knowledge of his true Heritage and Birthright—the man " made in God's Image " and who has access in the physical as well as in the spiritual world, to the Divine Source from which he sprang. May we not call this last the *Age of Vision* ? Of that grand moment for spiritual perception when we *see and know* (no longer merely believe and trust) that Love and Law are One ?

Truly at this third stage in the world's history man must accept his responsibilities as well as his privileges ; but he must do this also in his earth life as well as in his spiritual life. And the true man will not wish to shirk them in either case. He knows that the power to gain implies the power to lose—the power to use implies the power to abuse —the power to walk implies the power to fall.

Yet just as no sane person would choose the safe seclusion of the nursery for life, so I venture to say

no brave spirit will reject or fear the extended opportunities which are opening out to us in this new century.

Safety lies for us, not in dreading or ignoring the opening of our sixth sense, but in accepting it as the most normal thing possible in a world where all is progress and fresh attainment, in orderly sequence.

What we have to dread and avoid is the *disorderly* sequence—the making of mysteries where all should be as clear as day, and as simple as the Dawn. We are indeed surrounded by mysteries—the growth of the smallest flower and plant is a mystery which, if we could but understand, might open to us the keys of the Universe ; but there is all the difference in the world between our miserable man-made mysteries and the Divine mysteries, which are mysteries only in the sense that we have not yet *come up to them* in our march through the centuries.

God is never mysterious *for its own sake ;* which is just what so many men and women delight in being. This latter quality is specially to be noted amongst undeveloped and small-minded persons. The uneducated, and those of vacant mind, love mysteries, and complexities, and high-sounding phrases—they have this in common with school-children and servants. And I think this is just

the quality which gives so much savour to many occult gatherings and combinations. To "have a secret"; something your neighbour does not yet possess, or has not yet penetrated! What joy can be greater to the commonplace mind? I belonged once to an occult society and went through several degrees in it. When I was a neophyte, those just above me talked mysteriously of my necessary limitations, and of all the wonderful things which would be unfolded to my astonished gaze when the next barrier was removed and I stood in *their* proud position. When that time came, there were others ahead who spoke in similar strains of the superiority of *their* position, and so the game went on. "Man never *is* but always *to be* blest." The mysterious advantages were apt to melt away very quickly in my somewhat critical hands, but it would have been open to me to play the game very effectually myself, had that kind of thing attracted me; especially when, through circumstances, rather than any marked capacity on my part, I was for a time pushed on over the heads of my cotemporaries in the Society. "*Fortune*" certainly "*sends biscuits to those who have no teeth*," according to the Italian proverb. So many good people would have had a quite gorgeous time just then. It did not happen to appeal to me.

I think, as children, we have all indulged in this love of mystery for its own sake, and many of us never seem to outgrow our childhood in this respect.

But if we are to face the present-day problems and the present-day discoveries with sanity and balance, we must above all things make a clean sweep of all unnecessary complexities and mysteries. We must reduce the psychical Life to its "least common multiple" as it were, and see how far common sense and normal laws and symbols will help us in unravelling the skein. Instead of making tangles, let us see who can be most skilful in *unmaking* them—in disentangling. Let us bring all that is possible into line with the already normal, before setting to work to tackle the *apparently* abnormal. I say "apparently" advisedly, for it is surprising how much of the tangled skein can be made straight, how many knots untied, by the simple process of looking upon all psychic facts as governed by the same laws as physical facts; *working on a different plane, it is true*, and working through extended powers in consequence, but holding the same essential relationship with the facts; in one case as in the other.

Swedenborg in his law of correspondences gave us a golden key when he showed how every spiritual

fact has its correspondence in a physical one, and that every physical fact or law is simply the shadow cast by the antecedent spiritual law.

We need somebody at this juncture to emphasize the same Truth as regards psychical facts and laws and *their* correspondences with the physical world. I think it is a safe prophecy to make, that fifty years hence the physical realm will have enlarged its borders to such an extent that many present lines of demarcation between the physical and the non-physical will be obliterated; the terms normal and abnormal will have lost practically all their present signification and, in a great measure, any essential signification; for those who are then alive will have realized far more keenly than any of us can do, how these boundaries and limits and labels are for ever shifting as we ourselves march on; and that if Matter is indeed indestructible this can only be inasmuch as it is the expression and the garment of the great Unity in which all Life is for ever infolded.

Is it not St. Clement of Alexandria who relates how when Salome asked our Lord: "When the end should be and what should be the sign," He answered, "When the two shall be one—when that which is within shall be as that which is without"? This implies that "*that which is without*

shall be as that which is within," so here again we touch the Law of Correspondences.

Then also shall there be no separation between the Abnormal and the Normal, for all Being and all phenomena " are enfolded in an embracing and interpenetrating Love," and—to quote Emily Brontë :

> "Though earth and man were gone,
> And Suns and Universes ceased to be,
> And Thou wert left alone,
> Every existence would exist in Thee."

CHAPTER V

THE LESSON OF THE RESURRECTION

THERE is one aspect of the Resurrection which is of scientific as well as religious value, but which has hitherto been almost completely ignored both by the scientific and the religious world. This has probably been because on the one hand the religious man would dismiss such an idea as irreverent, whilst the scientist has not yet realized that our Lord's Resurrection was as much a demonstration of the physical continuity of life as it was an earnest of the spiritual survival of individual man. I take it for granted that most of those who read my little book will have realized already the profound truth that what happened in the Life and Death of our Lord cannot be intrinsically impossible for any of us, otherwise He was not "*the First born amongst many brethren*," nor "*an example for us that we should walk in His steps.*" It would be idle and foolish for any teacher to set a sum that his pupils could not possibly solve, or to speak to them in a language they had no faculty for understanding. Yet we accuse our Divine Teacher of having done

this, and we call it Reverence! Taking for granted, therefore, that our Lord's Resurrection was the demonstration of our own — an object-lesson translated into earthly terms and made visible for us on the earthly plane; surely we cannot fail to appreciate its enormous scientific as well as theological significance?

Once in the rolling centuries, men were permitted to see for themselves the rising as well as the setting of the Sun of Righteousness—the Perfected Humanity made in the Image of God—that Perfected Son, in whom He was well pleased.

That the risen body of Perfected Humanity should differ in many essential respects from the risen body of the imperfect man was inevitable. He had power to make His glorified Body visible or invisible at will, to enter through closed doors and be at once "in the midst" of His disciples, to break bread and eat with them of broiled fish and honeycomb, to integrate and disintegrate the physical part of the risen body at will.

One would like to know the real meaning of the conditions under which He warned Mary not to touch Him, "*for I am not yet ascended to my Father,*" and yet eight days later, invited the sceptical Thomas to "reach hither thy hand and thrust it into my side," etc. Possibly Mary's more sensitive physical conditions might have suffered from

physical contact between two planes of etherialized matter at varying rates of vibration, a suffering to which Thomas's coarser senses and literally thick-skinned insensibility would render him immune, just as a fine skin may be burnt by striking a match, where a horny hand can manipulate burning logs and live coal with impunity. We cannot expect to understand the exact higher physical conditions of the risen body of our Lord, nor would it be seemly to enter further into such discussions which at best can be only theoretical—of necessity we can have no standard of physical and psychical conditions belonging to a spiritual development so far beyond our comprehension.

But what we need to remember—which Sir Oliver Lodge and other students have pointed out so clearly—is that a difference in amounts is not a difference in quality, and that a line stretching over your head into the skies is not identical with a parallel line starting from an alien point.

The Resurrection of Jesus Christ is our grand object-lesson in psychical as well as spiritual evolution.

It put Death in its proper place—as a phase; a natural process and not a mysterious and grim catastrophe, with no link of continuity with either Past or Future in our lives. He showed us how to

pass through and emerge from this natural process, thus making it a stepping-stone and no longer a barrier. No wonder St. Paul, thinking over these things, should end his immortal chapter by the triumphant song, " Oh Death, where is thy victory ? Oh Death, where is thy sting ? "

When we become, through the education of Life, more worthy followers of our Risen Lord, we also shall doubtless be able to say of our resurrection bodies, " I have power to lay it down and power to take it up again."

Spiritualists will no doubt remind me here, that all the Scripture records with regard to our Lord's actions between the Resurrection and Ascension have been reproduced in the séance room. Granted that this may have been the case, in isolated instances of undoubtedly genuine phenomena, there is the whole gamut of difference between induced and natural phenomena, as much as between dead, artificial, and living and growing flowers.

To snatch the celestial fire may be possible, but it must always destroy the hand that grasps it, and to obtain prematurely the physical or psychical conditions belonging to a more advanced spiritual stage, no doubt is also possible, but in the end will be found equally disastrous. There is such a thing as setting in motion laws which will act in truth

—no doubt about that—but may crush us in their action.

All that is in Harmony and in Order tends to life—all that is out of harmony and out of balance (no matter how admirable in its own proper relations) tends to Destruction. It must be so. Therefore, when we choose to work for, or crave for powers that belong rightfully to a further stage of the soul's progression, there is no doubt we may obtain them if we will struggle and persevere sufficiently. The laws of our Being are not to be broken in order to secure our immunity from the results of our own folly and reckless daring; but we must take the consequences.

Our Lord's powers, both before and after His bodily resurrection, were indeed "occult" in the highest degree, judged by our standards, but normal and in perfect harmony with the plane of spiritual life on which He stood and whence He came.

Therefore there was no discord involved—no loss of balance, no want of harmony in the exercise of His "miraculous" powers; as they must always appear to those on lower planes of development.

Another great law—scientific as well as mental—is involved in the apostle's words: "*When He shall appear we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.*" I have often puzzled over those

words as a child, and even now it seems to me that the sense might be more clear if the words ran : " We shall see Him as He is, for we shall be like Him." That seems to me to put more simply the condition of sight being some affinity between the percipient and the subject. We cannot see anything *as it is* without this link of affinity and comprehension. We may see with our bodily eyes, but we cannot see it *as it is*. We may see a rose, but only he who loves the rose will see it *as it is*, or even approximately so. It is the same with everything, with human beings as well as books. We cannot see, as he or she *is*, any man or woman whom we dislike, with whom we have no point of likeness in fact. We cannot *criticize* a book if we have no point of affinity with it—we can abuse it, but that is a different matter, although it often passes for criticism.

And so in the grandest example of all, we are told that without some point of likeness there can be no vision, and without Perfect likeness no Perfect vision—the likeness is here spoken of as the result of the vision ; yet it is equally true that the vision would have been impossible without some likeness to start with. We only see that with which we have affinity—with which our eyes, physical or spiritual, are in tune. There are myriads of sights which pass us by because our eyes are not

in tune, not responsive to that scale of vibrations. Myriads of sounds pass us by because we are not in tune, not responsive to *that* scale of vibrations. The most beautiful sonata in the world may be played to deaf ears or ears incapable of receiving the musical impression—" of seeing it *as it is.*" The same law holds good through everything on each corresponding plane.

He cannot appear until we give the proper conditions, i.e. until we grow into His likeness, and then we shall see Him as He is. Think of it for a moment and realize that this is a grand scientific truth as well as a glorious spiritual prophecy ! Our Lord referred to this scientific truth when He said again and again : " He that hath ears to hear (understanding ears), let *him* hear." They must be tuned to the same note in order to become responsive to it ; otherwise there can be no receptivity.

Here again the spiritual truth is found to be also the scientific truth. It must be so, since that which is without (matter) is ever the reflection of that which is within and the interpreter of it. It is not in the least more wonderful that Science should interpret the Spiritual, than that the Spiritual should interpret Science ; " for these two are one," just as the true body of the Spirit (Christ's Resurrection Body) and the Spirit are

essentially one. Of this essential Unity, the earthly body and the earthly consciousness are but the shadows thrown upon the screen of earthly life.

Again, the union of sex is not only the *union of the sexes,* but is also the Sacramental declaration of this initial truth; that spirit which forms, and substance which is formed, are inextricably joined together—" That which God hath joined together, let no man put asunder "—in his mind. The joy of union, on its spiritual and therefore *real* side, *is the joy of realizing essential and eternal Truth.*

The conjunction of two bodies alone can bring no joy. It is the *spirit* which enters " into the joy of the Lord." This is the cardinal sin of sensuality, that it drags down the spirit—the Senior Partner—to give expression to that which would otherwise be dead, inert, unconscious.

" Know ye not that your bodies are the Temples of the Holy Ghost ? "—of the Whole Spirit—the Spirit of the Whole—the dwelling-places of the Eternal ONE ?

Many years ago, when all nations were mourning the sudden cutting off of a young life round which many hopes had centred, I was living in London under very lonely conditions. Just then an epidemic of disease was sweeping through the land, and many were mourning their dead. Gloom

and misery were in the very atmosphere and each day one wondered who might be the next victim. It was especially important that I should keep well and strong at the time, as my presence with a chronic invalid was just then imperative. I had recently come up from the country, and my landlady had allowed me to return to a house saturated with influenza without a word of warning. There seemed little chance of my escaping, and day by day I felt my strength and spirits breaking and the chances of escape growing less. To go to bed comfortably with a bout of influenza does not seem very tragic ; but the misery lay in the daily fear of being laid aside at a crisis in another person's life, when no one, at the moment, could take my place.

A certain crossing in London is always connected in my mind with the premonitory symptoms of a sickening feeling of dizzy helplessness, as I struggled across the street on that occasion, with throbbing head and trembling limbs.

That seemed to be the crisis. Whether it was sheer will power and the feeling that I *must not* get ill—or prayer—or cinnamon (which we sucked all day just then)—I don't know.

I trust a youthful critic, eager to "pounce," will not suggest that it is blasphemous to speak of prayer and cinnamon in the same sentence. I put

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them in this conjunction because I had recourse to both, and because they signify the spiritual and the temporal aid which I believe are generally (not *necessarily*) combined in cases of deliverance from bodily evil. Anyway I escaped on this occasion.

I think it was the following night that sitting alone by my bedroom fire and not feeling very cheerful, it struck me that it would be a great comfort if some friend from the other side would come and talk to me for a time. It was about four or five days after the sad calamity to which I have referred; but I was not then thinking of any public loss, but of my own private anxieties, and as a matter of fact I was hoping that George Eliot would respond to my craving for sympathy. Another name, however, was spelt out, and in a form which puzzled me very much. It was the shortening of a Christian name which I took at once for a surname, having known (very slightly) two people of the name in past years. After ascertaining that neither of them was present, it suddenly flashed across me that I was making a fundamental mistake, and that a *Christian name*, in shortened form, was being given to me.

Then of course I recognized the identity. I do not wish to go into any unnecessary detail, but must mention the fact that I never spent a more miser-

able hour in my life than in trying to soothe and comfort the poor distracted and amazed spirit which had so curiously come to me—apparently at haphazard, as we should say.

During that hour I was more closely drawn to him than to many acquaintances of a lifetime; for all barriers seemed to be thrown down and spirit communicated with spirit through some medium which included, and yet transcended, speech. In this way it was conveyed to me that the conditions of darkness, and coldness, and loneliness of which he spoke (temporary conditions, thank God!) had been brought about through errors in his life, but more especially through errors of the flesh and passions insufficiently controlled.

Of how many other young lives—suddenly cut short—might not the same be said?

"*Why did nobody tell me? Why did nobody tell me what it would mean when I got over here?*" he wailed over and over again, and it seemed impossible to comfort him or even to gain his attention at first. There was nothing but this outburst of young despair and a sense of outrage strong in him. It seemed so unjust that he should not have known "*what it would mean over there.*"

I shall never forget the reality of that tortured cry, or my own miserable helplessness in the face of such despair. At last a gleam of light came to me.

It struck me that the best thing to do would be to beg George Eliot to come and advise me, and perhaps help and comfort him.

She came and I explained matters as well as I could through my own sobs and tears. She understood at once, but said she could not personally help. "*It is not my work,*" she said, "*but there are those appointed to help all poor, sad spirits who come over in these conditions and cannot at first find comfort. I will give your message to one of them and it will be attended to.*"

To give the brighter side of this true story, I may add that the very next night the same spirit returned, thanked me for what I had tried to do, and said that some one had been sent to him. This was all. But about ten days later I had my third and last interview with him. He then came (spontaneously) with a much brighter atmosphere around him, and told me with gratitude of the help that he had received and, with the greatest joy, that he had at length been able to see his relations and feel them near him, although not yet able to make them realize his presence. Since then I trust that this latter happiness has also been vouchsafed to him.

Only a few months ago—in November, 1909—I had a very curious and interesting corroboration of my experience. Being called upon to look over

some automatic writings by a medium whom I had never met before, with the view of giving some advice about selections from them for a lecture, she happened to mention incidentally, communications from this very spirit. I need not say that there was no question of including these in her lecture—in fact it was with the greatest difficulty that I could induce her to give her mind to the subject at all; for so many other names were mentioned by her at the same time.

But I was determined to hear *this* message, no matter what else was left out, though I scarcely hoped for any special corroboration of my own experiences. *Her* message was fairly recent, and mine dated from many years ago. At last I induced her to read it to me, in the few minutes left at my disposal. She did so, and strangely enough he referred in it to the conditions in which he found himself "*immediately upon passing to the other side.*" I do not mean that he referred in any way to myself, but his description of his sensations (which were far more detailed than I have cared to give) and the reasons for them, were almost word for word what he had given to me; not through automatic writing, but by the curious process I have referred to already.

I have not yet touched upon my reasons for breaking a silence of so many years and telling this

story. When given they will show how the gist of the matter brings us back to the very subject we have been discussing, i.e. the essential unity of spirit and substance. That first sad evening of my experience when the poor forlorn spirit had been left in charge of the ministering guardian, I asked George Eliot to explain to me why such heavy penalties should attend errors of the body, which after all are not the only sins in the world, nor, as it seemed to me, the worst ones. "Surely cruelty — conscious, intentional cruelty and slandering and heartless malevolence are far, far worse ?"

She said : "It is not a question of degree, but a question of the *quality* of the offence. The 'punishment' of sin as you call it is no arbitrary affair. Sins bring their own penalties and this is always under Law—the law which is Love. Those sins of which you speak may not be 'worse' than others, but *in their very essence they separate from the Divine more effectually because they are an inversion of the 'Central Truth of Being'—and that which should be the nearest to the Divine, can thus become, through an inverted process, the furthest in separation from It.*"

And now—after this long digression—which after all has led us back to our starting-point, I will conclude this chapter with a few words as to

Christ's declaration : " Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up."

He spoke of course of that temple which, with Him pre-eminently, was the temple of the Holy Ghost, and thus He showed Himself as the true Master Builder—the Divine Mason. He could lay down the outer Tabernacle and could take it up again at will—and enter into the House not made with Hands—Eternal in the Heavens—the glorified Body of His Resurrection.

I remember spending an afternoon some years ago with that true Saint Dr. John Pulsford, the author of *Morgenröthe* and several other remarkable books. No one who ever had the privilege of a conversation with him, or even of seeing him without speaking to him, could have come away without realizing the presence of one of God's true Angels. His daughter—a quiet, practical, middle-aged woman—said to me very simply that afternoon, when we were alone : " I sometimes wonder why I should have had such a privilege granted to me above others, of being allowed to live in the same house with such a saint as my father." And I could well understand her feeling. The sainthood was not one that needed any explanation or canonization. One saw and realized it at once, as an undeniable fact.

I can see him now, with his lovely white hair

and beautiful face framed by it—his cheeks as soft and rosy as those of a child, and his blue eyes so intense in colour—so full of love and goodness—so childlike and yet so wise! He was well over eighty years old then, but overflowing with healthy, almost boyish spirits. He looked as bright as a schoolboy longing for the holidays, as he put a hand into either sleeve of his coat and said in the most delightfully natural voice possible: "*I* am not down here. My body is down here just now, but I shall get rid of that some day" (and he tugged away at the sleeves as if he wished he could shuffle off the mortal coil as easily). "*I am not here,*" he repeated. "*It is only my worn out old coat.*"

No coat ever looked less worn out than his physical body; so radiant with expression and vitality.

But no one who knew and loved him here, can doubt that his Resurrection Body must be a glorified Body. He must surely be one of those who see Him as He is, being conformed unto His Likeness!

CHAPTER VI

"ALL THESE THINGS SHALL BE ADDED UNTO YOU."

"SEEK ye first the Kingdom of God, and His Righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you."

Here we have, in a nutshell, the condition, the promise, and the right sequence, of things psychic and things spiritual. This puts the Psychic Realm in its true place; but in a world where most things are inverted, this sequence seems to be seldom observed. It is true that many convinced agnostics (by which I mean those who not only *think*, but who *know* there is nothing to know!) have had their negations first shaken, and then shattered, by entering some psychic door, either by chance or through the connivance of a friendly acquaintance. We can all rejoice that this is so often the case, but it is not the true and orderly sequence of things. We are certainly told by the apostle "that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural and afterwards that which is spiritual." This sequence is obvious enough in a world where, of necessity

under present conditions, the natural must come before the spiritual; but I know of no teaching which says: "First the psychical and then the spiritual." The dangers of the psychical plane are non-existent for those who place the spiritual first and foremost and study the psychical Realm only in the light of the Spiritual Kingdom.

It is just because this is the exception and not the rule, that so many disasters occur and so many danger signals must be run up.

Without the protection of the spiritual forces (which protection we cannot expect if we do not even ask for it), we are setting out on troublous seas without chart or compass, and cannot be surprised that shipwreck so often overtakes the over-reckless mariner. It is not only foolish, but very dishonest and wrong to ignore such cases. They *do* exist, and the effort to hush them up and slur them over is the crudest of all blunders, as well as the cruellest.

No one is really deceived by these feeble denials of a most palpable and undoubted fact. If half the time spent in denying facts were spent in analysing and attempting to guard against them, we should have a much cleaner bill of health in the Psychic Realm, and the Pope and Mr. Raupert would find their Anti-spiritualistic Propaganda a much more difficult and less successful business.

"All These Things shall be Added"

At present our evolution seems bound to come along the lines of least resistance, and it is not to be wondered at, that the Psychic Birth should come in inverted form. We must make the best of it, but just because it *is* inverted we have need of the greatest caution and the most prayerful prudence in dealing with it.

If, in our imperfect state, it could have come right side up as it were—that is to say as the natural inheritance of the Perfected Spiritual Man, then indeed we might hail it as an unmitigated boon. As matters are, psychic gifts are not only in most cases irrespective of spiritual gifts, but frequently appear to be in inverse ratio to the former. Many kind-hearted and well-meaning people are trying to boom all mediums indiscriminately, as the most elevated and godlike Beings in our midst—but we all know that this is absurd.

When you find a person who is mediumistic and also highly moral and deeply spiritual, you have indeed come across a pearl of incalculable value. Far be it from me to say that such do not exist; but they are rare, whether in the profession or out of it. I think people do a great deal of harm by the exaggerated terms in which they often permit themselves to speak of mediums, as beings, as far above the rest of the world as the stars; and so forth. It is silly and it is untrue. Having some

mediumistic qualities myself, I think I may be allowed to speak on the subject without offence and without appearing personal in my remarks.

I can truthfully say that it has never for one moment struck me that any small gift in that line differentiated me from my fellow-creatures, except in making life more full of possible temptation. It is true that I can lay claim to no " test mediumship " as it is called, although spontaneous tests have sometimes been given to me ; but even if I could give " splendid tests " to every human being I met, as to their friends and relations, or past, or even future lives, I fail entirely to see how that makes one in any way *superior* to one's neighbours. It may certainly make you more sought after and more popular—but even this becomes a heavy burden sometimes.

I have known one or two excellent non-professional mediums who from sheer good nature have allowed themselves to be hunted from Dan to Beersheba, to stay in this or that country house—to accept dinner invitations galore—to join river parties and picnics and every other sort of social diversion, and to what end ? To be asked, metaphorically speaking, to " stand on their heads " to amuse an indifferent and often very ignorant audience—to meet with scant courtesy if their predictions were not sufficiently flattering to their

hosts, and finally to look back upon the years when they drew far too heavily on the bank of their own vitality and threw away cheques with reckless generosity, which did no real or permanent good to others, whilst deeply injuring themselves.

Some risks, no doubt, must be run in every kind of investigation, and even in the most normal actions of daily life. We never enter a train or an omnibus or cross a London street without running risks which would not be encountered if we remained quietly at home—on the other hand we should undoubtedly run serious risks to health by never taking exercise or breathing outdoor air, and if we stay at home to escape a possible railway accident, the roof of our house may fall in and crush us, or a lamp may explode and burn us to cinders!

The man whose aim should be to go through life without taking any risks would be a monster, not a man. But we are not bound to take *unnecessary* risks, and the wise man minimizes his risks so far as is compatible with a sane and healthy life. We must learn to do the same in our psychic lives and our Psychic Realm.

To many of us, ordinary psychical phenomena are spontaneous and unsought; but there is an ever-increasing number of persons who are endeavouring by all means in their power to induce

the phenomena, which do not come to them spontaneously; and here the mischief begins.

In England, and still more obviously in America, the usual rush has been made to turn all these unusual occurrences to account—to money account.

A most pernicious and dangerous literature has sprung up, and any number of book agents are willing to "mail you" a selection of pamphlets and booklets for a dollar or a dollar and fifty cents, which will put the world at your feet, if they accomplish a quarter of their promises. You will have money, success, good looks, a handsome husband or wife as the case may be, healthy and delightful children, business acumen; all you touch will turn to gold and every one you meet will be hypnotized into marrying you or giving you a lucrative post of honour and responsibility, according to your supposed requirements and sex.

Now in spite of much that is grotesque and exaggerated in these claims, I have no doubt at all that something on these lines *might* be effected by a diligent and persevering student of this mischievous literature; but what would be the ultimate results, putting aside the unquestionable damage done to the moral sense of the disciple?

How would a marriage turn out in the long run, if founded upon these hypnotic suggestions? There are plenty of marriages so founded already;

but unconsciously on both sides. They are not as a rule distinguished successes, but the disaster would be far greater were the hypnotic process a conscious one. Imagine the mutual recriminations if the truth ever came out, in a moment of disappointed anger on the part of the too successful agent!

Or, again, what advantage would it be to obtain a responsible and well-paid post by these nefarious practices, only to be dismissed as hopelessly incapable when the dishonest mental pressure had relaxed, and the true character and true capacities of the impostor were disclosed? These are the avenues leading to the gloomy and terrible Halls of Black Magic, and we cannot be too solemnly warned against the smallest approach to tampering with powers that appear to offer us money or success at the price of taking an unfair advantage of our fellows, or of imposing upon them by the exercise of such faculties.

There are three special warning boards which I should be glad to see put up in the Psychic Realm.

First and foremost: BEWARE OF HYPNOTIC SUGGESTIONS. These are often made with the direct object of gaining some advantage from a fellow-creature, or of interfering in some way with his individuality. Hypnotic practices should certainly be as carefully guarded and safeguarded

by Science as vivisection has been, since popular light was thrown upon it. It may certainly be quite as cruel and as little to be justified in many cases.

Secondly : BEWARE OF AUTOMATIC WRITING when used (as, alas, so often happens) to back up prejudices and opinions, or to induce a course of action in others which will suit the plans of the agent, or even which may appear to him truly desirable at the moment.

Thirdly : BEWARE OF MENTAL PRESSURE OF ANY KIND, exerted normally or abnormally, with the view of influencing our neighbours. We are not the best judges of what they should do or leave undone—we make mistakes enough in our own lives without attempting to take on contracts of this kind for them.

In order to realize what a complete moral chaos may be brought about through such methods, we need only recall the lamentable blot upon an otherwise estimable woman who absolutely managed to delude herself into the belief that she was committing a most praiseworthy act by attempting to will to death a person who appeared to her, through his malpractices, the worst of criminals. But if this psychic game begins, where is it to end ? Are we, as individuals, to be the judges of who is to live and who is merely cumbering

the ground, through indulging in practices which are abhorrent to our individual judgment? Every one we meet who has read a psychic primer of the Black Magic order, may be "willing" us to death for anything we know! If we upset their plans for us, or annoy and humiliate them in any way, how can we have any confidence that this terrible mental guillotine may not be dragged out and set up — to chop our heads off, some fine day! The off chance that the machinery might be rusty and refuse to work properly would be poor consolation; in fact such a chance in our favour would be a very small one, for our own subconscious minds would quickly turn traitors, however unwillingly, and reinforce the malice of enemies by self-suggestion.

When we contemplate the enormous and at present *unrealized* force of *suggestion*—outside influences being continually fed through our silent and often unconscious response to them—can we wonder that wise people are apt to give warnings which the more ignorant, stubborn, and superficial are continually denouncing as exaggerated and absurd and quite unworthy of courageous men and women?

True courage is never foolhardy and does not take unnecessary risks. "Heaven helps those who help themselves." When once a danger is *realized* we must accept our responsibilities as

regards it—we have no right to expect special protection, unless we exercise due caution and judgment.

Singing hymns about the " Summer Land " and the " Beautiful Religion of Spiritualism " is not going to help us much, if we keep eyes and ears determinedly shut and talk nonsense about " loyalty to our unseen friends," and the " wickedness of doubting " anything that is said to come from them. Imagine a banker honouring a cheque for a large amount, over a signature as to which he had the slightest misgiving, and saying he thought it would be so disloyal to his client to raise any objection about it! Is any spirit — on either side of the veil—worth his salt, who would not implore us to be *wisely* critical of all that comes to us ?

" Prove all things—hold fast that which is good." Alas ! too many of us *prove nothing* and *hold fast everything*—good, bad, and indifferent.

Some very plain speaking is needed on this point, and we must be prepared for hard knocks from friends as well as foes, if we are willing to provide it. We shall be told that we are cynical and carping, and absolutely deaf to those finer impulses of the generous and trusting soul who alone deserves to penetrate into these higher regions of development; whence unlimited pages of ex-

quisite writings and speeches of marvellous oratory are constantly received by the Oracles of each small *milieu*.

To be a big person in a little place is of course very pleasant to the natural man (or woman), but it soon palls. To be a small person in a very big place is far more thrilling and delightful—and fortunately we can all taste this intoxicating experience! Even the most insatiable platform speaker must have hours of monotonous boredom, one would suppose. To be always talking and teaching must often be a weariness to the flesh, whereas to be always learning opens out endless vistas of interest and delight.

Therefore it is no real sacrifice to give up quantity for quality, and to accept cheerfully all the limitations and possibilities which a new and ever-advancing study is bound to bring with it.

Some years ago I was anxious to enter a chemical laboratory solely with a view to understanding some thing—however little—of the more attenuated forms of physical matter, i.e. gases, etc. I searched all over London before discovering the only institution where—as a woman—I could then go in for *practical* work, and have the superintendence of a professor at the same time. I have never regretted the six months spent in this way, and have the pleasantest memories of my professor's

kindness and patience. Before my fortunate meeting with him, I had come across a kindly and well-known but rather gruff man, who could not help me to anything but chemical paper work, and seemed rather curious to know why I wanted the practical work.

Being driven into a corner, I said honestly that I was intensely interested in psychical matters and wanted to see something of the more etherialized forms of physical matter—those which must be, presumably, nearest to the psychical Realm.

He looked at me with withering contempt and said with a leonine shake of his clever old head, "If you go into a laboratory for six months, you will soon get all the psychic nonsense knocked out of you!"

"But that is just what I want," I said eagerly. "I want to know just how much will remain on the psychic sieve, when the laboratory has given it all possible shakes."

He murmured something about this not being the usual woman's point of view, and melted sufficiently to wish me success in my hunt for a teacher.

I am always glad to remember this incident, because it proves to me that even sixteen years ago my attitude was critical as well as sympathetic towards the Psychic Realm.

An old friend of mine told me recently that he

sometimes amused himself by exercising a certain will power which he seemed to possess over strangers, and that it interested him to see how often he had success in this way.

For example, at a restaurant, say at Earl's Court or elsewhere, he would try to " will " that the tea-table of one special attendant should be more constantly filled than any others. He had often succeeded beyond the possibilities of mere chance coincidence. It certainly seemed a harmless experiment, and I think he considered me very hypercritical for denouncing his practices as unfair. " The gain of one must always be the loss of others," he pleaded. " And according to your views all competitive examinations would be condemned." Well, I have always thought it very doubtful morality to use hypnotic treatment (as is certainly done) to enable a man to pass an examination by force of a strong suggestion made mentally either to himself or to any of his examiners. It is quite conceivable that mental suggestion might act upon one of the latter, either in the case of paper work or *viva voce.*

The most dry-as-dust examiner *might* prove responsive to suggestion, and the suggestion given in the latter case would be naturally that the questions put should be those upon which the *examinee* happened to be strongest.

Certainly I think this would be the abuse of psychic powers. On the other hand one could not condemn a psychic father or mother or friend who, knowing that the young man had really worked hard, but was likely to fail through sheer nervousness (a disability of temperament), should concentrate his own mind upon the thought of the examinee as being calm and composed and able to make full use of the knowledge which he had gained, through hard work and perseverance. It may seem a thin line of demarcation ; but every intelligent person can, *if he choose*, discriminate between the use and abuse of these powers.

It can never be right to take an *unfair* advantage of others by exercising these mental gifts. If we honestly abide by this simple axiom we cannot go far wrong.

About twenty-five years ago there was a *cause célèbre* in London, which some of us can still remember. It was usually referred to as the *Fletcher Case*. Mr. and Mrs. Fletcher were mediums who doubtless had some genuine power to start with, but who had succumbed to the temptation of getting rich quickly, by using hypnotic influence over their clients and inducing the latter to make them valuable gifts of lace and jewellery, etc., on the ground that deceased relatives of the *clientèle* wished this to be done, in token of their gratitude

towards those who had opened the door of communication between the spheres. I do not recollect how long this sort of traffic may have gone on, but it was put a stop to by an action brought by an irascible old admiral whose wife had been one of the victims. The trial lasted for several days, and ended by a verdict of imprisonment against the mediums.

At that time I had been brought in contact with a Dr. Mack who was attached to the staff of a certain hospital in London. He was himself a convinced spiritualist and also an honest man; so felt constrained to give evidence (when called upon) against the Fletchers. It nearly cost the poor man his life; not I believe so much through the machinations of his enemies, *as through the effect of their threats upon himself.*

Each day that he appeared in Court, he knew himself to be under the battery of six of the strongest mesmerists in London who were deliberately "*willing him to death.*" I saw him several times during the ordeal, and can testify to the fact that he came as near fulfilling their wicked hopes as any mortal could do. It is impossible to say how far his distressing physical condition was brought about through their black magic, and how far it was owing to his own belief in their powers—but the result might have been the same

in either case, and morally they would certainly have been guilty of manslaughter. I am thankful to say that in time he recovered and lived for several years after these events had taken place. But such cases are a splendid object-lesson to us as to what might easily happen should psychic powers flood the world before spiritual development is parallel with them.

With the new psychology a new field has been opened, not only to science, but also to morality—fresh possibilities for progress, but, alas, fresh possibilities also for crime—a wider field for good, but a wider field also for evil and for infinitely more complicated forms of evil.

It seems to most of us quite difficult enough to contend against the forces that make for unrighteousness, which are visible and obvious to us—but these mental and hidden forces are infinitely stronger and infinitely more subtle. The Law of the Land is quite rightly very chary in accepting the plea of hypnotism as an excuse for crime. Needless to describe the abuses which would arise from any license in this direction. At the same time we cannot close our eyes to the fact that in many cases—even those of murder—the real criminal is not always the one who has materialized the deed, but the one who gave birth to the wicked impulse, and may often have consciously willed that

another should carry out the final act. Such a case as the "Trunk Mystery" at Monte Carlo would illustrate this truth. There can be little doubt that here it was the *woman* who was the more culpable of the two, and who, having gained an abnormal influence over her miserable husband, urged him to this final crime.

In the light of these new studies in mental science many of the old Bible maxims which have seemed to us, perchance, overstrained and exaggerated, will now appear quite reasonable and obvious.

"Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." This precept from the Sermon on the Mount is up to date with the most advanced views of the modern psychologist! The man not only harms *himself* by harbouring these unworthy desires, but who knows what unholy flame may be lighted up in the woman's heart *through his mental action?* It is a psychic as well as a spiritual fact, that each one of us is daily filling the atmosphere around him with healthy or unhealthy thoughts; which will quickly materialize into healthy or unhealthy actions. Where does matter end? Where does spirit begin?

Not one of us can answer that question. Neither can we say through what channels of etheric

substance our thoughts and words are daily impinging upon those of our fellow-creatures, although the latter may be divided from us by thousands of miles in space.

We are constantly receiving—we must also be constantly giving forth.

It is a terrible and overwhelming thought. Yet there is the bright lining to the cloud here, as elsewhere. For in this is the proof of our Cosmic unity and the basis of it. No man lives to himself, and no man dies to himself. All are inextricably woven into the warp and woof of Universal Being; but the shuttle of Destiny is wielded by the Everlasting Love in Whom all Being is involved.

"Thank God! our fates proceed not from our wills—
The Power that spins the thread shall blend the hue."

. . . . .

And therefore in these days of stress and storm, when the voices sounding in our ears may be those of the angels who would beckon us to further fields of interest and discovery, or the fiends who would tempt us on to the rocks to our destruction—when, in the words of Mrs. Browning: "*We stand blind on the rocks, to choose the right path from the wrong*"—then the only safeguard is to place Righteousness first and to expect the

unfolding powers of Humanity "*to be added unto us*" in due time.

The due time will of necessity differ for each individual; but there is no other safe rule.

People can never be educated to these powers *en masse.* "*They should come as a natural stage in the soul's progression — not as a forced and artificial growth, full of danger.*"

But as each one fulfils the condition and becomes a guardian of the trust, so in time will the new Heavens and the new Earth descend upon us, and "the voice of weeping shall be no more heard."

. . . . .

Love on! thy far-off children shall possess
That flying gleam of rainbow happiness;
Each wish unfilled, impracticable plan,
Goes to the forging of the force of man;
Through thy blind craving, novel powers they gain,
And the slow Race develops in its pain.
See their new joy, begotten of thy woe,
When, what thy soul desired, their soul shall know.
Thy heights unclimbed shall be their wonted way,
Thy hope, their Memory; and thy dream, their Day!

FREDERIC W. H. MYERS.

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